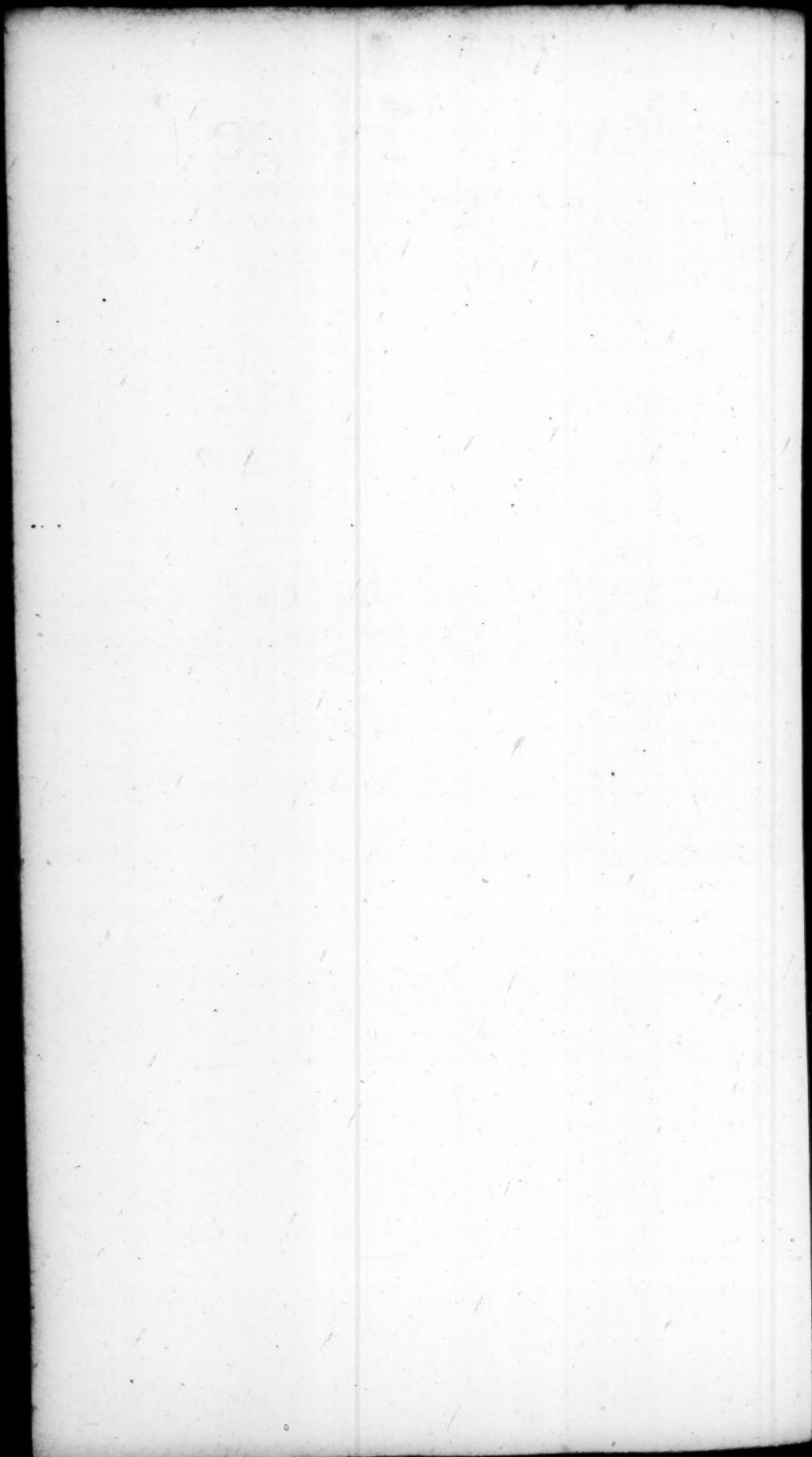


THE
Believer's Hope
OF THE
Transforming Vision
OF
CHRIST,
THE
REASON and MOTIVE
OF
REAL HOLINESS
IN THE
PRESENT STATE,
FROM
I JOHN iii. 3.

Contemnamus igitur omnes ineptias: totamq; vim bene
vivendi in animi robore, ac magnitudine, & in om-
nium rerum humanarumq; contemptione, ac despici-
entia, & in omni virtute ponamus.

Cic. Tusc. Lib. i. Cap. 40.

LONDON: Printed in the Year 1721.





I JOHN iii. 3.

*And every Man that hath this Hope in him,
purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*



HE Apostle having been speaking of the Happiness that remains for the Children of God, and representing it as a State partly hid from us, and partly reveal'd, *Ver. 2.* He descends to shew, how they must be qualified that would be Possessors of it; and they must be Persons holy and pure like the Author and Purchaser of this Happiness. Our Study of Holiness should not grow cold, nor our Endeavours after it languish, because neither Christ nor our Happiness do yet appear, in Regard the very Hope of it is sufficient to awake in us Desires after that Purity which must qualify us for it, and to quicken our Preparations: *He that hath this Hope in him, purifieth, &c.*

The Object of this Hope is the Appearance of Jesus Christ, our Vision of him, our Likeness to him, and our living eternally with him.

The *Effect* of this Hope in every Subject where it resides is Self-Purification. Every Man that hath this Hope in him concurs with God's Grace in purifying his own Mind and Life.

The *Pattern* of a Christian's Purity is Christ; *even as he is pure*, which denotes not a Parity, but a Likeness; not Equality, but similar Quality; he must, and will labour to resemble Jesus Christ in Purity, as the only Way to resemble him at last in Glory: Without inherent Holiness none shall see the Lord.

The Doctrine is this,

It is the Nature of Christian Hope, wherever it is planted, to engage a Man to purify himself as Christ is pure.

I shall, with the Lord's Assistance,

First, Describe Hope in its general Notion, as an Affection of humane Nature; and then describe Christian Hope by those several Characters that distinguish it from the false Hope of Hypocrites.

Secondly, Prove that true Christian Hope will produce Purity, as its genuine Effect.

Thirdly, Shew you wherein that Purity doth consist, which Christian Hope produceth.

Fourthly, Shew you how this Hope hath such an Influence upon Self-purifying, or what is the Ground and Reason of the Connection between Christian Hope and Purity.

Fifthly, Shew you what Improvement you ought to make of this Doctrine.

First, I am to describe Hope in its general Notion, and then to describe *Christian Hope*.

Hope

Hope is such a Passion or Affection of the Mind, as is exercised about some future Good that's hard, but possible to be obtained ; or by which we are disposed to believe that which we wish for will come to pass.

Good in its general Notion or *Idea* is the Object of Love ; considered under the Circumstances of *future* and *difficult*, is the Object of Hope ; considered as *future*, to distinguish it from the *Object of Joy*, which is a Passion of the Soul exercised about a Good in Possession, which was before desired ; as *difficult*, to distinguish it from the *Object of Desire*, which regards a *future Good* absolutely, without any Consideration of its Difficulty. But 'tis not considered as *impossible*, for this Apprehension leads to Desperation, which is a Passion opposite to, and exclusive of *Hope*.

Christian Hope is a *sacred Passion*, or a *special Grace* wrought in the Soul of a Believer by the Word and Spirit, whereby he depends upon God in Christ, in a Course of patient Obedience, for the Accomplishment of all *Gospel-Promises*, especially those that concern his future Blessedness. This is *Christian Hope* properly taken, but sometimes 'tis taken *tropically*, and that either *metaphorically*, or *analogically* ; as when 'tis attributed to inanimate Creatures, *Rom. viii. 23. The Creature was made subject to Vanity, not willingly, but by Reason of him, who hath subjected the same in Hope.*

Or *metonymically*, for the Object of Hope, as in *Prov. xiii. 12. Hope*, that is, the Thing hoped for, being deferred maketh the Heart sick. And *1 Cor. ix. 10. The Husbandman ploweth and thresheth in Hope, that he may be Partaker of his Hope*. The *blessed Hope*, *Tit. ii. 13*. Again, sometimes Hope is taken for the Ground of Hope, *Prov. xix. 18. Chasten thy Son while there is Hope*, that is, while he is young ; and his flexible Disposition, before 'tis hardened with youthful Lusts, affords Matter of Hope, that he may prove a good Man.

I call the Christian's Hope a sacred Affection, or a special Grace, because 'tis not raised out of the common Principles of Nature and Reason, but supernaturally formed by the Operation of the Holy Ghost. See Rom. xv. 13. *Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost.* And the Word is the Means or Instrument by which 'tis wrought in the Heart, Psal. cxix. 49. *Remember the Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

'Tis wrought in the Heart of a Believer, for 'tis the Effect of Faith, and differs from it thus; *Faith* respects the Word promising, *Hope* the Thing promised. *Faith* respects the Faithfulness and Authority of the Promiser, *Hope* the Goodness of the Promises. *Faith* may respect Things as present, *Hope* is exercised on what is to come hereafter.

There are *Three Properties* of the *Object* of *Hope*.

1. That it be a *future Good*. *We are saved by Hope, but Hope that is seen is not Hope; for what a Man feeth why doth he yet hope for?* Rom. viii. 24. We must therefore patiently wait, and depend upon God for what we believe will come to pass. In Heaven when we come to the full Enjoyment of the Happiness we now look for, there will be no further Use of Hope, no more than there's Occasion for the *Anchor* when the Mariners are arrived safe on Shore, *i.e.* for their own Safety; Hope will then be turned into Joy.

2. That it be a *possible Good*. The Apprehension of Impossibility kills Hope at once; a Good wholly out of our Reach may be foolishly desired and wish'd for, but can't be an Object of Hope; for who can hope to conquer an Impossibility? This is the Case of the Spirits in the *infernal Prison*, the Decree of God and the Sentence of Heaven have render'd it an impossible Thing for them to possess the Joys of Heaven; therefore they are past all Hope. *Dives* could not

not obtain one Drop of Water to cool his tormented Tongue. The Worm of Despair perpetually feeding upon condemned Souls is not the least Ingredient of their Misery.

3. That it be *difficulty* obtained ; for without intervening Difficulties Hope would arise into full Persuasion and Assurance : And seeing many Difficulties must be broke through and conquered, before we can be Partakers of our Hope ; therefore is the Exercize of Patience required during this State of Hope, which Hope constantly issues in Obedience, as the only Way to the Glory and Rewards hoped for.

Having described a Christian's Hope, as to its Nature, I shall describe it by its *Characters* that distinguish it from the false Hopes of Hypocrites. And,

1. Christian Hope may be known by its Parentage and Extraction, it is *in & v. from above* ; God is the Parent of it, and gives it Being. As it is an Hope which ends in God, so 'tis an Hope from God, as the Beginning and Spring of it. As the heavenly Inheritance hoped for is freely given by God, so likewise is the Hope of it ; but the *Hypocrite's Hope* is a Creature of his own forming ; he would be nonplus'd, and unable to give an Answer, if one ask'd him how he came by his Hope : And his being not able to give an Account of it, shews that he came not fairly by it : 'Tis a Self-created Fiction, a counterfeit Hope ; whereas he that hath this Hope in Christ is begotten to it by God's regenerating Grace, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead.* This Hope is not born with Men, nor of a natural Descent, but is of a supernatural Extraction : 'Tis a given Hope, 2 Thess. ii. 16. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope through Grace.*

2. It may be known by its Ground, which is the precious Promises, or the Mercy of God engaged by Promise. The Saints are said to *hope in his Mercy*, and therefore the Lord taketh Pleasure in them, *Psal. cxlvii. 11.* And he keepeth his Eye upon such, *Psal. xxxiii. 18.* And as they hope in his Mercy, so also in his Word, his Word of Promise. *My Soul fainteth for thy Salvation, but I hope in thy Word, Ps. cxix. 81.* God's Truth and Mercy are joyned together in his Promises to make the Grouud of his People's Hope compleat: His Truth tyes his Mercy to them, otherwise the Consciousnes of Guilt would forbid them to hope. Hope, without a Promise to support it, is a groundless Hope, like an Anchor cast upon a Wave.

The World is depraved by Sin, and sunk into a State of Fear; therefore God invites us to himself by his Promises. Now, Promises are Declarations of God's good Will in the Gospel, whereby he signifies what Good he will freely bestow on us, if we look after it; and these Promises kindle in us a lively Hope. The infallible Certainty of them affords a sure Foundation of this Hope; for the Hills and Mountains shall sooner start from their own Bases and Centre, than one Tittle of any Promise of God fail.

That God is true is the Ground of a Believer's Hope; but an Imagination that God will be found a Liar is the Ground of the Hypocrite's Hope.

Cursed be thy Hopes, O impenitent Sinner! because they are disgraceful to Almighty God; for unless he prove a Liar, thy Hopes must deceive thee, and leave thee miserable. Unless God will deny his own Word, which he hath magnified above all his Name, thou canst never obtain what thou wouldest make the World believe thou hopest for: God will dispense his future Rewards according to the Tenour of his Promises, but thou who goest on in thy Sins hast not one Promise to plead for thy Hope of eternal Life. On the other Hand, the Threatnings of the Word

Word belong to thee, and are Ground of Fear and Trembling.

3. Christian Hope may be known by its Object, which is, to be like unto Christ, and to see him Face to Face, Ver. 2. *We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* 'Tis as perfect a Conformity to Christ in Holiness and Blessedness, as the humane Nature is capable of; and the clearest Views of God's Glory that are attainable, that the Christian hopes for.

Whereas the Hypocrite's Hope, if measured by the Desires of his Heart, is only for a negative Thing, as not to be made miserable; or for some sensual Happiness to gratify his Lusts. They hope not for Perfection of Holiness, which is the Glory of Heaven, because they hate it, and can't endure imperfect Holiness in the Saints on Earth.

Do not they spit at the Image of God in his People, reproach them that bear it, trouble and persecute them for using Means to be made more holy? Therefore, when they tell us, they hope to be saved, they must only mean, that they hope to escape eternal Fire, and the Agonies of Hell, and the Devil's Company; but they don't hope to be saved from their Pride and Earthliness, their sensual Lusts, their malicious, unbelieving, ungodly Hearts. They do not hope to enjoy God, and live in everlasting delightful Communion with him, and praising of him. Nay, they care not if they go to Hell, provided they might but carry with them Provision for their Lusts, and that the Object of their carnal Delights might follow them to perpetuate the Pleasure of an animal Life.

How wide is the Difference then between the Hope of a true Christian, and a false-hearted Hope, as to the Object of their Hope! The Hypocrite's Hope determines chiefly in Negatives; he hopes more that the Threatnings of the Word will not be verified, than that the Promises of the Word will be fulfilled: He hopes

hopes God will not be so strict and severe upon Sinners as Ministers preach he will be. The Christian, whose Heart is purified by Grace, hopes for the glorifying Presence of the All-comprehending God, and to be satisfied with his Likeness. They hope to be freed from the Chains of their Corruptions, and from all the Imperfections of their Love to God; and that the perfect Love of God in Christ will be the very Nature and Complection of their glorified Spirits; and the Actings of this Love, with the most lively Apprehensions and Feelings of God's Love to them, their everlasting Solace and Ravishment.

4. Christian Hope may be known by its essential and concomitant Acts.

(1.) As it is accompanied with an earnest Desire of the Things hoped for. The Expectants of the heavenly Bliss are Men that breathe after the Fruition of the Object of their Hopes: The Language of their inflamed Souls is, *When shall we come and appear before God? As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God: My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*, Psal. xlvi. 1, 2.

The Psalmist compares his Desires after God to the Thirst of the *Hart* after the Water-Brooks. Now, *Naturalists* observe, that the great Thirst of this Creature is caused partly by its Constitution, partly by the scorching Heat of the Sun, and partly by its Food; for some tell us, they feed upon Serpents, by whose Poysen their Bowels are so inflamed that they become exceeding thirsty, and with Violence hunt after Water to quench it, but especially, and with more Truth, when *Harts* are heated by a Chase.

Such a vehement Desire possessed this good Man's Heart after the Enjoyment of God. And the Evangelick Prophet says, *With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early*, Isa. xxvi. 9. And 'twas the Apostle *Paul's* Desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23.

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These spiritual Desires are the Wings of the Soul, whereby she flies to God her Centre, that she may be at Rest. They are the Feet of the Soul on which she follows hard after God : They are not *languid Velleities* and *lazy Wishes*, like the Man's in *Tully, who laid himself along on the Ground, with a woud to God this were to labour ! Utinam hoc esset laborare !* They are not the Desires of the Sluggard, who desireth and hath nothing, because his Hands refuse to labour. But the Desires that accompany this Hope are laborious, in avoiding all Hindrances, and in using all Furtherances, they are constant, and cease not but in the Enjoyment of the Object.

Moreover, a sincere Christian doth not desire Christ out of Necessity only, because he knows he can't be saved without him ; but out of Obedience and of Choice, he desires him for himself ; what he is, and for what he has done, as well as for what he has promised to do. When impure Sinners are plunged in deep Distress, when the Shadow of Death fits upon their Eye-Lids, when they can't live any longer, and yet are afraid to dye, they may with plentiful Effusions of Prayers and Tears desire God to receive them to Heaven, not to serve him there, not to enjoy the Divine Presence (for they used to say to him, Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways) but as a Sanctuary from the Strokes of revenging Justice, as a Refuge from the Distresses of Hell : And will such Desires prevail, when they are not so much Desires of Purity, as of Pardon ?

Whereas, the Expectants of Heaven long after Deliverance from Sin as well as Sorrow ; they desire *Impeccability* rather than *Impunity* ; they would see the Funerals of their Lusts, their Corruptions upon the Cross, nor would any more grieve the good Spirit of God, by breaking of his Laws. Their Cry is, *Who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death ? Rom. vii. 24. Oh ! that my Ways were directed to keep thy Statutes ! Psal. cxix. 5.*

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An Agreeableness between God's holy Laws and the Frame of their own Hearts, is what they breathe after: A perfect Rectitude in all the Powers of their Souls, that will fully and exactly answer Gospel Requirements, is more desired by them than Ten Thousand Worlds.

(2.) As it includes an high Pleasure, Contentment, and Satisfaction in the Thoughts of the Objects hoped for, though it be mixed with some Pain, by Reason of their Absence.

An Heir at Law to a great Estate, though at present he be under Age, and meet with many Hardships and Difficulties, yet the very Thoughts of that ample Patrimony he hopes for gives a deal of Satisfaction to his Mind; and his Joy is renewed every Time he entertains it in his Thoughts. Believers are Heirs in Law-Title to a glorious Inheritance, on which they may live plentifully for ever: And though they be in their Minority, and have it not in Hand, yet the very Hope of it often brings it into their Thoughts, and their Thoughts of it can't but be attended with Pleasure, according to *Rom. v. 2. By whom also we have Access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.* The World wonders how God's People can rejoice, or be merry, while encountering with a Variety of Difficulties and Miseries; but here's the Spring of their Joy, their Felicity is laid up in Hope in another Place, which Hope is so certain, that they no less rejoice than an Heir doth who is near at Age.

When they think what a glorious City they are travelling towards, what Royal Immunities and Privileges belong to it; when they take into their Thoughts the great Things that God hath prepared for them that love him, such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard; can we conceive but such Thoughts must affect, yea, transport them with Abundance of Delight?

The nobler and more excellent the Objects are which we contemplate, if Interest and Propriety be added, the stronger

stronger and purer is the Pleasure they minister to us : And what can we hope for greater or more enduring than Fulness of Joy in God's Presence, and an eternal Felicity maintained by his Right-Hand ?

(3.) As it implies a tugging and Contention against all superable Difficulties. The Object of Hope is out of Sight, remote from Sense ; we have not yet seen the other World : But this is a Difficulty that may be overcome by the Exercise of Faith on the Promise of eternal Life ; for, *Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. Thus Faith supplies the Defect of Sense, by giving a present Subsistence to Things we have in Hope.

By Virtue of this Faith the hoping Christian can, as it were, annihilate the Distance and Interval between the Revelation and the Accomplishment of the Promise, and by a secret Anticipation feed upon the Joys of the heavenly Paradise before-hand, as if they were in Possession ; thus the Difficulty is overcome.

Besides this Difficulty, there's the Red Sea of Tribulation to be sailed over, the Fear of Death to be conquered, and many other Enemies of our Hope to be encounter'd ; there's no coming at the Regions of eternal Light, but through the dark Entry of Death. Now, this Heart-purifying Hope will give Courage and Patience to carry us through, and master all these Difficulties. The Hope of good Success, and wearing the Crown of Victory, how will it animate and encourage us to fight the good Fight of Faith ! 'Twill heighten our Spirits above Fear and Danger, make us bold as Lyons, yet patient as Lambs under all these Exercises that are necessary to qualify us for this glorious Victory.

Men would never submit unto the holy Discipline of the Gospel in the Duties of Repentance, Self-Denial, and bearing the Cross ; nor expose themselves to the Hatred and Malice of the World for Righteousness-Sake, nor so earnestly contend for the Faith once deliver'd

liver'd to the Saints, even unto the Hazard of Life, and all that's dear to them in the World, unless their Spirits were raised to such generous Engagements as these, by the Hopes of very signal Recompences and Rewards.

And though the Things prepared for the Saints be future, and not without Difficulties compas'd, yet the Things themselves are so great, that they swallow up the Pain of Hope and Expectation. *Abraham against Hope believed in Hope*, Rom. iv. 18. His Hope triumph'd over all the Difficulties that Sense presented to him about what he hoped for; for he was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully persuaded, that what he had promis'd, he was able also to perform: And as in the Birth, so also concerning the Sacrifice, and Death of his Son, *Abraham against Hope believed in Hope*, being persuaded that God was able to raise him from the Dead.

Finally, Sometimes the Promise is delay'd, and 'tis difficult to bear a Delay; but in this Case, Hope begets Patience to endure it: For we read of the *Patience of Hope*, 1 Thess. i. 3.

(4.) As it excludes Despair; many wicked Men do really despair, though at present, through the Diversion of their Thoughts, they feel not the dismal Effects of it: As Fire in a Flint-Stone appears not 'till it be stricken with the Steel, and then it flies out. This indeed seems to be rather a State of Presumption and Security; but some apprehend, that Presumption and Despair are not so inconsistent, but that they may be virtually in the same Subject; what shall we call the Absence of this Hope in a Mind capable of it, but Despair, or not hoping? The Apostle tells the *Ephesians*, Chap. ii. 12. That a While ago, before their Conversion, they were without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, *having no Hope*: Yet many who are without Hope feel not the Bitings of Despair,

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because they consider not their Condition, which In-consideration is the Result of *Atheism*, and the Product of *Infidelity*. Where there is no Consideration, there can be no Faith; and where there is no Faith, there can be no Hope. And though Despair be not in every wicked Man in Act, 'tis there in the Seed and Root, which in Time, without true Repentance, will break forth in actual Desperation; though at present they are rather presumptuous, than formally hopeless. But the Hope of Believers stands in Opposition to, and excludes both Presumption and Despair: It stands in Opposition to Presumption, by a due Apprehension of the Justice and Holiness of God; and to Despair, by a due Apprehension of his Mercy.

And this Hope is stronger or feebler, according to the Degrees of Probability, that the hoping Believer shall possess what he hopes for; or as his Sight is clear, or dim of those Characters within the Soul, and upon the Life, by which God's Children are distinguished from his Enemies.

Secondly, I am to prove, That true Christian Hope will produce Purity, or will put a Man upon purifying himself.

1. A Demonstration or Proof may be taken from the Nature of God, who caused this Hope to spring up in the Soul, and who will consummate and finish it: He is an holy God; *there is none holy as the Lord*, *1 Sam. ii. 2.* Such is the infinite Perfection of his Purity, that he chargeth his holy Angels with Folly, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight.

Now, if this Hope be God's Off-spring, it must resemble its Father; every Child is of the same Nature with its Parent, and so is this Child of Grace, and must therefore have a strong Tendency towards perfect Purity, and put the Subjects on to be daily purifying themselves. Did not this Hope carry in it a strong Impulse to Purity, it would not look like a divine

divine Thing, but would be liable to be questioned, whether it came from God, and be esteemed of a spurious Original.

Moreover, this is one End for which God puts this Hope into his People, that it might be an Instrument of Duty, and a Principle of Diligence in the Exercise of Godliness. And this End would be defeated, if this Hope did not urge Men to Purity, but God doth nothing in vain, nor ever misseth his End, therefore this Hope must have in it a *cleansing Virtue*.

2. The Charter of this Hope is another Proof, which is the blessed Gospel; the Purport of which Charter, and of all the Privileges and Promises of it is to advance the Reformation and Purity of Men: For, thus the Apostle argues, *Having therefore these Promises, Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. It is on these Terms only, that the Promises do assure us this Hope shall pass into Fruition. We have nothing to do with the glorious Privileges of this Charter, but on the Condition of self-purifying; what God hath joyned together in the Gospel-Covenant, let not us put asunder in our Practice: God hath in the Frame of his Covenant inseparably connected Purity and the Hope of eternal Life. 'Tis only the *pure in Heart* whom by this Charter God allows to hope for the beatifick Vision, or to see himself, Mat. v. 8. So that if we hope to be treated by God according to the Tenour of this Charter, we must expect to receive our Happiness from him in his established Way, which is by being first made holy, and purified; Desires and Endeavours after which this Hope must excite in us: They are the unholie and unclean who flatter themselves with a vain Hope, without God's Allowance.

3. A farther Proof is taken from the End of the Discoveries made of the blessed Hope, and the second Appearance of Jesus Christ: Why is Life and Im-

mortality brought to Light ? and the State of Glory we hope for so clearly discovered in the Gospel ? And why are we so often told of Christ's second Coming ? but that these may be so many Motives to become eminently holy in all Manner of Conversation, that when Christ who is our Life shall appear, we also may appear with him in Glory. Is it not for this End the Apostle Peter minds the *Jews* of our Lord's second Coming ? 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. *Seing then that all these Things shall be dissolved, what Manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness, looking for and hasting unto the Coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on Fire shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat ; wherefore, Beloved, seeing ye look for such Things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and blameless.*

Why doth a Lord and Master that's abroad notify to his Servants the Time of his coming home, but that they may make Preparation for it, and have all Things in Readiness for his Entertainment. Our Lord Jesus hath notified to us his Appearance, that his Servants may be in Readiness for it, have their Lamps trimmed, and their Loyns girded, that they may put off the filthy Garments of Sin, and put on the Robe of Holiness ; for herein our Preparation consists, according to Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World ; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

We don't answer the End of the Discovery made of the blessed State we hope for, nor of the Revelation of Christ's second Coming, if we are not provoked thereby to purify our Minds from filthy Lusts, and to lead a godly Life.

4. It appears from the Pledges of this Hope, which are the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ ; the

Seals of the Covenant of Grace, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper ; the Spirit of Sanctification, or Christ in us, who is the *Earnest of our Inheritance*, Ephes. i. 13, 14.

The Spirit by the Grace of Regeneration doth sign us for his, as with a Seal ; and, as by a certain Pledge, doth assure us of our future Inheritance : For an Earnest is a Pledge whereby we confirm a Bargain, a Piece of Money taken in Part of Payment, whereby we assure the Payment of the whole.

Of the same Nature is the Regenerating Grace of the Holy Spirit ; 'tis a Pledge of our whole Inheritance : Now all these are strong Obligations to Purity.

Did not Christ give up himself to Death, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, *zealous of good Works*? *Titus* ii. 14. And did he not rise from the Dead that it might appear he had made full Satisfaction to all the Claims of Justice, had procured Peace and Pardon for penitent Sinners ? And are not these Engagements upon us to dye to Sin in Conformity to Christ's Death, and to rise to Newness of Life in Conformity to his Resurrection ?

Then, were not the Sacraments instituted for the same End ? What doth the washing us with Water in Baptism signify to us, but our Need to be washed from our Sins with the Blood of Christ, and by the Grace of the Spirit, and our Duty to labour after that inward Cleansing ?

What is the Lord's Supper intended for, but to establish and increase our Communion with Christ in all the Exercises of Holiness ? And can we come under stronger Engagements than these against all Impurity ? Can unholy Persons hope to be owned and accepted as Members by a holy Head ? By partaking of the Sacraments we do solemnly bind our Souls to Jesus Christ, and give up ourselves wholly to God, to love

love him, obey him, and walk with him all our Days; and can this be done without Self-Purification? Is not this the Substance of Holiness? Is not the Covenant sealed in these Sacraments mutual and conditional? Can then Pardon and Life eternal, which are sealed on God's Part, be expected and hoped for on any other Terms than Purity and Holiness on our Part, to which in these sealing Ordinances we oblige ourselves?

So that no other Hope can be nourished and encourag'd by these Pledges than a *Self-purifying Hope*:

5. It appears from the inward Spring and Principle of this Hope, and 'tis animated and acted by *Love, divine Love*. That Love of God and Christ that keeps alive this Hope, will not suffer us to live in Contrariety to God, but will constrain us to an Imitation of him. It is the Property of Love, I mean a Love of Complacence, to conform us to the Disposition and Will of the Person whom we love: Now, Conformity to Christ consists in Purity, he was holy, harmless, and separate from Sinners, the immaculate Lamb of God; this Hope, therefore, being acted by Love will put Men upon purifying themselves.

Thirdly, I am to shew you wherein that Purity consisteth, which Christian Hope produceth:

In general, it lies in Conformity to the Holiness or Purity of God and Jesus Christ. Now, the Holiness of God is his Love of himself; the Holiness of Christ is the Love of his Father, and Devotion to his Will. Our Holiness or Purity is the Separation of ourselves to God by Love; of which Holiness there are three Branches, according to the various Powers where 'tis met with.

1. Holiness in the Understanding consists in its being illuminated: God's Image in this Faculty is renewed in Knowledge, *Col. iii. 10. And have put on*

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the new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.

2. Holiness in the Will lyes in a sovereign Love and Affection to him in the highest Desires after him, and in the delightful Exercise of this Love and Desire in a Devotedness to his Glory.

3. Holiness in the executive Powers and Practice is such a Government of the whole Life, as expresseth these inward Principles of Knowledge, Esteem, Delight and Love; an actual devoting all we do to him.

Holiness or Purity, may be considered, as oppos'd to its Contraries, and 'tis twofold.

(1.) Such as excludeth Mixture. So Wine is pure, that is not sophisticated or embased with any other inferiour Liquor. The Heart is then pure, when the Love of God reigns there, and is not mixed with the Dregs of any inordinate sinful Love of the World, or ourselvses.

(2.) Such as excludeth Filthines. As that Water is pure, which is not muddied; and that Soul is pure, which is not defiled with the Love, or Embraces of any filthy Sin. So that Holiness or Purity is the close Adhesion of the Soul to God alone. Impurity is the Soul's mingling itself with something below itself. The unclean Person under the Law must wash his Cloaths, as well as himself; signifying, a Necessity of our parting with all Impurity, even the least; at least in Endeavours, so far as to cherish none, and to favour none.

Again, *Internal Purity* on the *Negative Part*, denotes these two Things, 1.) *Freedom* from a *corrupt End*. 2.) *Freedom* from a *secret Allowance* of Sin.

1.) *Freedom* from a *corrupt End*. The End has a great Share in specifying the Action; a bad End makes the Action bad: Corruption there overflows into the Work, and redounds to the Person; and defiles both Work and Worker.

The *Pharisees*, with all their Shew of Religion, were an impure Generation; though they performed many Services materially good, yet they directed them to a base and sinister End, affecting the Praise of Men, and overlooking the Glory of God: They sought themselves, and their own Things; not God, nor the Things of Jesus Christ.

On the other Hand, the pure in Heart are pure and holy in their Ends, they seek not themselves, but God; it is the Top of their Ambition, and their highest Design, to lift up the Name of God in the World: They can, with *John Baptist*, be content to decrease, so that God and Christ may encrease; to be trampled upon, provided their Dishonour and Reproach may be a stepping Stone to raise the Throne of God's Glory higher.

2.) *Freedom from the secret Allowance of Sin.* Tho' they could cover their Sin from the Observation of Men, and it were never like to bring them to open Shame in the World; yet Men possessed of this Hope, holy Men, dare not commit it; for they believe in him that is *invisible*. A secret Allowance of Sin, of any known Sin, though of small Account in the Eyes of the World, can't stand with this Purity. Sin must be the Evil which we would not; it must be the abhorred Thing that our Souls do hate, if we would be reckoned among the holy by a holy God. No *Agag* must be spared, nor sinful Pleasure rolled as a sweet Morsel under our Tongue; no forbidden Fruit must be touch'd, nor any cursed Idol hid in a secret Place, if we would stand among the pure in Heart.

I grant, we can't, at present, get above the Acts of Sin, because our Sanctification is not perfect, but the Love and Allowance of Sin is inconsistent with Grace. A judicious Disallowance of Sin, and a continual Contest and Struggling against it, must enter into the Evidence of our Purity: Sin is the Thing that a true Christian hates, *Rom. vii. 13.*

Fourthly, I am to shew you, how this Hope hath such an Influence upon self-purifying, or what is the Ground and Reason of the Connection between Christian Hope and Purity.

And it hath this Influence,

1. Partly as it respects the Foundation of it, that is God. He that hath this Hope *in him*, that is, in God, or in Christ.
2. Partly as it respects its Object, namely, such a Blessedness as consisteth in being like him, and seeing him as he is.

As to the *former*, the Influence of Hope is primarily to be resolved into the Will of God. 'Tis his Will, that this Hope should put the Subjects of it upon purifying themselves, and in that we must acquiesce.

But as to the Manner of its Operation, this Hope draws down such a vital Influence, whereby the Heart is purified, as it eyes God under a three-fold Notion;

- (1.) As the Author of this Purity.
- (2.) As the perfect Pattern of it;
- (3.) As the Rewarder of it.

Christian Hope has an Influence on self-purifying, as it eyes God.

- (1.) As the Author of this Purity.

1.) By his immense Goodness. What can it be resolved into but infinite Goodness, that God will condescend to wash and cleanse such unclean and filthy Lepers, and use a Variety of Methods for this End? 'Twas an Act of great Goodness in God to adorn Man with this Excellency of Holiness in his primitive State; 'tis an Act of greater Goodness to restore it to him in his lapsed State, after he has lost it by his Folly. He that hath this Hope, gives God the

the Honour and Acknowledgment proper to him, the Honour of every Degree of Purity that he partakes of he owns it to be his Work, the Product of his Love. And how good is God in thus purifying unclean Sinners ! How doth his Goodness shine, in providing a Laver of Purification for us to wash in, even the precious Blood of his dear Son ! Our Purity is effected through the Atonement of a crucified Saviour, and this Atonement is the Gift of God ; *He set forth his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins*, Rom. iii. 25.

And must not the Apprehension of God's Willingness to cleanse Sinners, make them willing to be made clean, put them upon the Use of those Means by which God heals and cleanses defiled Souls ?

(2.) By his infinite Wisdom, whose Work it was to find out a Way beyond the Thoughts of Men or Angels, to restore the lost Image of God to Mankind, by the Sacrifice and Merits of Jesus Christ.

Satan shewed his Subtilty, in tempting Man to break his Covenant with God, by a Promise of gaining thereby more Wisdom ; whereby he robbed him of both his Innocency and Happiness, and extinguished Holiness in this lower World : By which Means he thought to hinder God of all active Glory from the noblest Rank of his Creatures on Earth ; but behold the Discovery of God's infinite Wisdom, in baffling this subtle Serpent, by taking a Course to re-imprint the Image of his Holiness upon some Part of Mankind, that shall fill up the Rooms of the Apostate Spirits, and for ever glorify him in Heaven for this Contrivance.

How amazing is this Wisdom, that takes Occasion from the Sin and Fall of Man to bring to himself more Glory, even the Glory of his Mercy and rich Grace, in raising up Man to a more excellent State than that he fell from ! That repairs his moral Image, after it had been so lamentably blotted and defaced ?

Hope in God under this Character must put them upon Endeavours, that this wise Contrivance of re-impressing on Men's Souls the Image of God's Holiness may take Place in them.

3.) By his Faithfulness to his Promise. God made an early Promise, that *The Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head*; that is, should destroy Satan's Power, by giving forth his sanctifying Spirit to rescue Souls out of his Hands. And God hath shewed himself faithful in the Performance of this Promise; for, *when the Fulness of Time was come, he sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons*, Gal. iv. 4, 5. And that he might purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works.

God promised there should be *a Fountain opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem for Sin, and for uncleanness*, Zech. xiii. 1. This Promise is made good, this Fountain is set open in the Sin-cleansing Blood of the Redeemer; and Thousands of impure Souls have experienced the powerful Virtue and Efficacy of it, who can say, "Once we were such as the Apostle affirms, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, but we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God."

'Twas one End for which the Messiah was promised, and sent, that he might *fit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, and that he might purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness*, Mal. iii. 3. Jesus Christ was to be, and is the Fountain of our Holiness and Purity, as well as the Foundation of our Comfort and Happiness. And he that hath a right Christian Hope in him, eyes God as the Author of this Sanctity by his Faithfulness, and is moved thereby to long and strive after that Purity of Heart and Life which

which is intended by God's Promises of a Saviour and a Sanctifier; and which is effected by their Accomplishment.

He that hath this Hope in God eyes him,

(2.) As the *perfect Pattern* of his Purity. *He purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Now, as Hope eyes God, as the *perfect Pattern* and *Copy* of Purity, so it hath an Influence upon Self-purification.

1.) As the Pattern directs in Respect of its Perspicuity and Clearness.

2.) As it allures and attracts by its Excellency.

1.) Hope looking towards God as a Pattern of Purity, hath an Influence on Self-purification, as this Pattern directs by its Perspicuity and Clearness. While we govern our Tempers and Courses by a Pattern we can't err, or do amiss, in Case the Pattern itself be perfect.

Now God, and our Lord Jesus Christ are perfect, there's no Blot in this Copy, no Error or Imperfection in this Pattern; if we follow its Direction, it will engage us to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God, that we may express as near a Resemblance thereof as our Circumstances will admit of: Though we can't equalize this Pattern by infinite Holiness, we may imitate it by daily Advances in Holiness. Perfect Purity, though 'tis not the Saints Attainment in this Life, and in these Bodies of Sin and Death, yet it is their Aim, they long, and breathe, and strive after it.

It is true, we are commanded by our Lord, to be perfect, *even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*, Mat. v. 48. But this must be understood of Sincerity, and Compleatness in all the Parts of Purity, not of Equality, or a Perfection in Degree.

2.) Hope looking towards God, as a Pattern of Purity, hath an Influence on Self-purification, as this Pattern attracts by its Excellency: For, a Pattern is not only *directive*, but *attractive*; such is the transcendent

dent Excellency of God's Holiness, that it doth allure the hoping Believer to get as much of this excellent Quality as he can into his Heart and Life.

Holiness has a Beauty upon it wherever it is, though in a poor Saint that's covered with Rags, and makes him more excellent than his Neighbour; but it never shines with such an Orient Lustre, as when we behold it in God, where 'tis in its highest Perfection. He is a God glorious in Holiness; and what an attractive Virtue must the Sight of the Divine Holiness have on a Believer! *Ducimur Exemplis*, We are led more by Copy than Command; Examples have usually more Force than Precepts: Therefore our Lord, knowing how we are given to Imitation, is pleased to propose himself as a Pattern of Holiness, and would have us follow him as dear Children.

It is recorded of *Lycurgus* a Grecian Law-giver, that he established nothing by Law for the People to do, but he first did it himself: So what our Lord commands, he is himself an Example of.

Does he require us to be merciful, to do Good, to love our Enemies, to overcome their Evil with Good, to be patient, liberal, communicative, to be Lovers of Justice and Truth? Are not all these Virtues conspicuous in him? Doth not he feed and cloathe his Enemies that lift up the Heel against him? Is not he good to the evil and unthankful? Doth not his Grace triumph over our Unworthiness? Is not he patient and long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance? Did not he go about doing Good? And is he not liberal in his common Gifts and his special Grace? Now the superlative Excellency and Amiableness of these Instances of the Divine Holiness, are proper to allure the Saints to an Imitation of them.

He that hath this Hope in God, eyes him,
(3.) As the *Rewarde* of *Purity*.

And

And this comprehends the *second* Branch of the Division of this general Head, wherein I affirmed, that Christian Hope hath an Influence upon self-purifying, partly, as it respects its Object, namely, such a Blessedness as consisteth in being like Christ, and in seeing him as he is.

God will reward Purity on Earth with Preferment in the Court of Heaven ; and this Reward may be considered,

[1.] In the Greatness of it : *In the keeping of God's Commandments there is great Reward*, Psal. xix, 11. 'Tis too great either for our Thoughts or Words, greater than can be expressed with our Tongues, or conceived in our Minds, 1 Cor. ii. 9. 'Tis *what Eye hath not seen, or Ear heard*. If we consider how the great God hath been preparing this Reward from all Eternity, and that on Purpose to set forth the exceeding Greatness of his Love to his holy People, and with what a great Price it was purchased for them, namely, the precious Blood of the Son of God, we can't but judge it must be transcendently great, great enough to recompence all the Pains we can take, and all the Endeavours we can possibly put forth in the Way of Holiness to be fitted for it ; great enough to engage us to the most exact Conformity to the Rule of Holiness that we can reach.

Can any look upon Purity as rewardable with a Crown of Glory that fades not away, with a Kingdom that cannot be moved, and yet refuse to strive with all his Might to excell therein ? With the *holy*, God will shew himself holy ; they shall be admitted into his holy Presence in Heaven, to see the Glory of his Holiness, and to worship him in his heavenly Temple in the Beauty of Holiness : And is not such a Sight and such Preferment sufficient to quicken our Desires and Endeavours after an eminent Degree of Holiness ?

[2.] In the *similar, homogeneous* Nature of it to this Purity which is preparatory for it. The Reward is

is of the same Nature with this Purity, which shews how necessary 'tis that we get the Principles of it into us, *Ad summum non est perveniendum, nisi ex Principiis*; for there's no coming to Perfection hereafter, but by Essays and Beginnings here.

It is the Glory and Beauty of Holiness that makes the Saints in Heaven shine like the Sun in the Firmament. Holiness and Happiness are not so different Things as many take them to be, but are rather two distinct Expressions of the same Notion; they differ not so much in Kind as in Degree: Present Holiness is the Bud, and Happiness the Flower it ripeneth into; Purity the Seed, and Felicity the Fruit that grows from it. Therefore, the *pure in Heart* are pronounced *blessed*, Mat. v. 8. in Regard that Blessedness is begun in them here, which is to be finished in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Holiness is not only a Means, but a Part of Salvation; 'tis not only the Medicine, but the very Health of the Soul: And perfect Holiness, which is the perfect Knowledge and Love of God, will be Heaven itself.

Agreeable to what a great Divine faith Dr. Manton. " Holiness is not only necessary as an Evidence of our Interest in the relative Privileges, such as, Pardon and Adoption; nor only by Way of Gratitude, for Satisfaction received but as a Part of Salvation, and a Means to obtain the rest."

Holiness in its Maturity, when refined from all Mixtures and Allays of Sin and Corruption, will be one of the brightest Pearls in the Crown of Life: What can we hope for, or desire more than to be like Christ, and to see him as he is! And if we hope to be like him in Heaven, and pursue this as our Happiness, it must needs work us into a Likeness to him here.

Having thus considered the Way and Manner how Hope in God has an Influence on self-purifying, as a

far

shews
of it farther Enlargement under this Head, I shall shew
Prin- what are those internal Springs or Parts of Purity,
after, which this vital Influence of Hope produceth.

(1. This Hope worketh Repentance, and that unto
nake Life ; for, Repentance is an Exercise of Hope, the
Fir- greatest Enemy to which is Despair ; for it breaks the
erent Force of all Arguments and Motives we can use. Would
two it be to my Purpose to preach the Doctrine of Re-
differ- pentance to the Prisoners in Hell, who know the Day
lines of Grace is past, that their Time is over, and that
into; the most passionate Grief will never break those Chains
rown of Darkness, with which they are bound ; nor all their
nced Tears quench those everlasting Flames they are in,
egun and that therefore, there's no Room for a right Re-
dom pentance ?

They may lament their Folly, that they should ex-
pose themselves to endless and intolerable Misery ; but
are not capable of a genuine Sorrow, that God hath
been dishonoured, his Spirit grieved, his just and sa-
cred Laws trampled on and broke.

So that Repentance is proper to a State of Hope, for 'tis an Expectation of Mercy and Favour from God that provokes us to it. Men would never enter upon the Severities of a Gospel-Repentance, and undergo all the Pains and Labour necessary to evidence it to be sound and real, had they no Encouragement that it would be acceptable to God, and available to procure them a Claim to Pardon of Sin, and a Part in the heavenly Inheritance.

Whom could we persuade to part with all his car-
nal Delights and Pleasures, that we could not give
Hopes to of exchanging them for better and more
enduring ones ? 'Tis Hope that worketh Repentance,
and Repentance is a cleansing the Heart and Life from
all Impurities, a sweeping clean the House that the Spi-
rit of Holiness may come and dwell in it, who never
abides in a polluted Dwelling-place.

(2. Christian

(2. Christian Hope worketh a Contempt of the World, which is a great Branch of Purity ; and in raising the Soul it refines her ; for, as she ascends, the terrene, earthy, and gross Parts fall off, as in *Chymical Precipitations*, or as *Elijah's Mantle* fell from him in his Ascent to Heaven.

The Love of this World is a defiling Thing, it stains the Soul that is possessed of it ; that therefore which dispossesses this defiling Love, purifies the Soul ; for, the freer the Soul is from Mixtures of worldly Affection, the more heavenly she is, and consequently the more pure.

Heaven is a most pure Place, and as tis in the Order of Nature, the nearer the Elements are to Heaven,

the purer they are : So it is in the Order of Grace, the more the Mind soars aloft in heavenly Meditations, and the higher 'tis got above the World, the more refined it is, and the less Defilement doth it contract from the

Impressions of Objects of Sense.

Now, 'tis the Property of this Hope to produce in the Soul a generous Contempt of this World, when it comes in Competition with the better that is to come. What little Things doth Hope in Christ and Heaven make the Honours, Riches, and Pleasures of this World, that carnal Men make their Gods ! Look, as when the Sun appears, the superior Light of this Lamp of Heaven drowns the glimmering Light of the twinkling Stars : So let but a lively Hope give a Believer a Prospect of the Glory of Heaven, and it swallows up the Glory and Grandeur of earthly Fruitions, and makes them dwindle away into a Nullity.

The higher the Tower or Mountain is that a Man climbs up, the less do Things upon the Surface of the Earth appear to his Eye when he looks down ; so the higher

the higher we can ascend in our Thoughts, Desires, and Affections above the World, the less affecting will the Things of Earth be to our elevated Spirits ; and in the less Danger shall we be of being infected by them, as the Birds that fly high are in less Danger of being caught by the Lime-Twigs, Nets, and Pitfalls of the Fowler, than those who are much upon the Ground.

(3. Christian Hope produceth a friendly Disposition to God, and a strong Inclination after him. How can we but be enamoured of that Being, from whom we hope for such glorious Things !

Hope, like a *Bias*, will carry the Soul towards God, as its *Centre* and *Rest*.

Were God our Enemy, 'twould be hard to love him, but when we trust and hope, that he will prove our best, our everlasting Friend, how can we hold our Hearts from loving him ? Now, the higher the Principle of Love to God is raised in our Souls, the more pure and holy we are ; for what is Holiness, but a Separation of ourselves to God by Love ? When we will what God wills, and hate what God hates, here lyes our Purity, *Eadem velle & nolle, ea domum est* this is our Likeness to God.

(4. It produceth a Composure of *firma amicitia*. Soul, an Aptness to look on, and contemplate Things not with a transient Glance, but with a steady and fixed Eye ; as an Architect surveys a Building to take a Pattern of it ; according to 2 Cor. iv. 18. *While we look not at the Things that are seen, but at the Things which are not seen ; for the Things which are seen are temporal, but the Things which are not seen are eternal.*

'Tis not a desultory Hope, that carries the Soul from one Object to another, without resting upon any, but it stayeth the Soul upon its proper Object, and is therefore compared to an Anchor, *Heb. vi. 19. Which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul both sure and steadfast, and which entreth into that within the Veil.*

Now

Now the more composed Frame the Soul is in, the more settled its Thoughts are, the more capable it is of receiving the Impressions of the Word and sanctifying Spirit. Besides, that which fixeth the Thoughts on their proper Objects, helps to purify the Soul by banishing those vain and unsettled Thoughts that pollute and defile it.

(5. Christian Hope produceth Courage, Magnanimity, and Greatness of Spirit.

Many would be holy and good if they durst, but they are afraid of this, and the other Inconvenience and Trouble ensuing from it; as the Frowns of great Men, disobliging a Friend, being treated as singular being at some Expences for Christ's and Religion's Sake: and by the Influence of this slavish Fear they are kept in Subjection to Sin, and the Powers of Darkness.

But this Hope fortifies the Spirit, that a Man dare face Dangers, and encounter Difficulties in God's Cause. It makes him bold, like *Nehemiah*, that he will not leave his Work, and fly from Duty, though it be to save his Life. When *Shemaiah* told *Nehemiah*, they would come in the Night to slay him, he bravely replied, *Should such a Man as I fly; and who is there that being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his Life? I will not go in*, *Nehem. vi. 11.* He had this lively Hope in him, that made him courageous in the Performance of Duty, and to think it a Dispragement, to suffer himself to be governed and baffled by a Principle of carnal Fear.

There are no such valiant Soldiers in Christ's Army, as they who have conquered the Fear of Death by the powerful Hope of eternal Life; they are the Persons who acquit themselves as Men in the Lord's Battle, to the Honour of Christ their Captain: Whereas a timorous cowardly Christian will make nothing of his Profession of Godliness, but be ready to let it go and cry out, *A Lion is in the Way*, upon the least Appearance

or Apprehension of Danger; he dare not stand up for God and Christ, nor be seen in his Duty, when the Malignity of the Times hath made it hazardous: He will launch forth no further in the Cause of Religion, than that he may retreat with Safety, in Case he see a Storm arising.

To our Perseverance therefore in a holy Course, there is requisite a Spirit of Courage to withstand the Corruption of the Times, and to be valiant for despised Truth, and rather, to seal it with our dearest Blood, than betray it.

Now 'tis a Christian Hope that breeds and nourishes this Spirit, so that the Possessors of it are not ashamed of a persecuted Profession, but will persist in it against the Contradictions of an ungodly World. "Say not, "says one, thou hast Royal Blood running in thy Veins, "and art begotten of God, except thou canst prove "thy Pedigree by this heroick Spirit, and dare be "holy, in Spight of Men and Devils."

(6. Christian Hope begets Diligence. He that hath this Hope in him will not do what may disserve, or omit what may serve the Design he hopes to accomplish; for he doth not hope to be saved by Talking, or sitting still.

Though we can't properly earn Heaven, as Wages due to our Work, yet God requires, that we labour hard for it before we have it, and *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. and *give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10.

Hope in all Employments is the Principle of active Diligence: Hope sends the Merchant through infinite Hazards to both the *Indies*: Hope sends the Husbandman to the Plough, and raises the Tradesman early from his Bed, and puts him on his long Journey to Fairs and Markets.

So in Religion, Hope is the great Instrument of Duty. Were it not for the Prospect of a glorious Re-

compence of Reward, Religion would languish, and Zeal die; the Spirit and Life of Duty would vanish: Without which the outward Part of Duty would be but an empty Formality, or a solemn Piece of Pageantry. Every Service done for God, which is not animated by an Hope of final Blessedness in him, is but the Sacrifice of Fools. Why is this Hope called a *lively Hope*, *1 Pet. i. 3.* but partly from its Effect and Influence, because it makes the Possessors of it lively and vigorous in the Performance of Duty, and the Pursuit of Heaven, and partly from its Perpetuity? 'Tis such an Hope as will not fail and give up the Ghost, as the Hypocrites doth.

Why are Believers industrious in God's Service? Why do they proclaim War with Sin? Deny themselves sensual Pleasures and present Gain? Why do they improve their Day of Grace, and serve God instantly Day and Night, as the Twelve Tribes did, *Acts xxvi. 7.* but because they are animated by an Hope of the Promises?

In a Word, why do they abound in the Work of the Lord? but because they hope and are persuaded that their Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord? And who can forbear running the Race of Holiness, that hath such a glorious Prize in his Eye and Hope? Who can be unwilling to put forth all his Might in *fighting the good Fight of Faith*, when he hopes to storm Heaven and take the Kingdom of Glory by Force?

(7. Hope prompts the Christian to Prayer, which is a Heart-purifying Duty.

Hope to Speed will make us earnest and importunate with God for the Spirit of Sanctification, to heal and cleanse our corrupt Natures, and to carry on the Work of Grace he hath begun.

He that hopes to obtain of God whatever he asketh agreeable to his Will, will ask abundantly that his Joy may be full; and he knows that his Sanctification is the Will of God, therefore he can confidently

beg

beg of him, that this his Will may be done upon him, that he may possess his Vessel, not in Concubiscence and fleshly Lusts, but in Sanctification and Honour.

It is only he who is in a State of Hope, that can and may pray, and of such 'tis only they who have this Grace of Hope in their Hearts, that will pray as they ought.

A deep Sense of their Wants will drive them, and the assured Hopes of meeting with suitable Supplies, will draw them to the Throne of God's free Grace, and keep them there 'till the Lord be gracious to them at the Voice of their Cry, and faith, *I will, be ye clean.*

(8. Hope in Christ and Heaven produceth a Love to Holiness, and makes the Possession and Exercise of it our Delight.

How can it be otherwise, when we hope that Holiness will be a great Part of our Happiness ! Do we hope that Holiness will be a gainful Trade, and bring in the greatest Profit ? This must make the Practice and following of it very agreeable to us, and cause us to find Pleasure in it.

I grant, we must labour to be so refined and exalted in our Spirits, as to be holy for Holiness-Sake, to fall in Love with it for its own native Beauty and intrinsick Excellency ; but yet the Rewardableness of it renders it more amiable, is an Addition to its Beauty and Lustre, and no small Advantage to our Love to it, and Complacency in it. And there is nothing like Love to facilitate the Practice of it, and help forward our Growth in it.

(9. And Lastly, It possesseth the Soul with Patience in bearing outward Sufferings, in performing the severer Exercises of Religion, and in waiting for the Accomplishment of Promises that seem delayed in Respect of Time. In *1 Thess. i. 3.* we read of the *Patience of Hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ in the Sight

of God and our Father. A voluntary and constant Patience under the Cross for the Gospel's Sake is upheld by the Hope of a far exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory ; as *one* faith, " Hope is no Dr. Collins. " thing else but Faith looking out at the " Windows of the Soul, in Expectation " of the Coming of the Thing believed."

God is not capable of Hope, for such is the infinite Perfection of his blessed Nature, that he has all Good in Enjoyment, nothing in Desire. The Angels and glorified Saints can't properly hope, they are in the Possession of their End, and enjoy the *Ultimation* of Hope. And the Devils and condemned Souls are uncapable of Hope, they ha'n't the least Star-Light of a Promise to refresh that everlasting Night of Darkness they possess.

Hope then is a Grace proper to the present State, where we are upon our Way to Rest. In Heaven, Hope as a Means ceaseth, as the Blossoms drop off when the Fruit grows up ; but while we are at a Distance from the promised Reward hoped for, our Hope produceth Patience, both in bearing the Crosses and Troubles necessary to train us up for it ; and also in waiting 'till our Change come, and we are made fit to be Partakers of our Hope.

And this Patience produced by Hope is highly reasonable, for though the Things prepared for the Saints be future, yet they are so transcendently great, that they swallow up the Pain of Expectation and Hope.

Moreover, Hope not only makes that which is future to be present, but represents in one View that which can't be enjoyed but in Intervals of Time ; it unites the successive Parts in one Point, so that what is divided and lessened in the Fruition, which is always gradual, is offered by our Hope to us at once and entire ; and this makes the Exercise of Patience and Expectation far easier to us. *We are saved by Hope, but Hope that is seen is not Hope, for what a*

Man

Man seeth why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with Patience wait for it, Rom. viii. 24. Now, Patience is one Branch of a Christian's Purity, as Impatience is a spiritual Impurity and Disorder. If Holiness be a Chain or an Assembly of all Graces, Patience must be included among others ; both as it preserves the Soul in a becoming Temper towards God and Man ; and as it enables the Soul to practise all other Graces, which tend to prepare it for the Blessedness hoped for.

Thus have I shewn you, by these various Effects of Hope, what an Influence it hath on Self-Purification.

(5.) *Improvement.*

1. We may infer, that there's a great deal of *false Hope* in the World, yea, in the Christian World. Many claim this Hope in Christ and Heaven, who are not able to give a Reason of their *Hope*, 1 Pet. iii. 15. What Matter of Grief is it that many Millions in one Generation after another perish, and go to Hell possessed of groundless Hopes of Heaven, and will not be undeceived 'till the dreadful Experience of everlasting Flames open their Eyes !

Wherefore seeing this groundless Hope is Satan's great Engine to keep People quiet and asleep in a State of Sin, 'till he has got them out of Reach of a Cure ; and since nothing is either more destructive, or more common, I shall endeavour to overthrow this Hope, and to beat it out of all its Refuges, to prevent, if possible, the Deception and Misery of Sinners by it.

(1.) Some hope to be saved, because God is merciful and good ; the common Mercies of God are the Foundation on which many build their Hopes of Heaven ; but the absolute Mercy of God, considered in itself, or the common Emanations of it, is too weak a Foundation for such Hopes. For though God is a God of infinite Mercy, yet we have no Reason to apprehend that his Mercy and Goodness oblige him to

save all Men, let their Hearts be ever so impure, their Lives ever so full of Disorder.

God is necessarily merciful and good, but the Exercise, Dispensation, and Effects of his Mercy and Goodness are arbitrary, and ordered by his Will, guided by his infinite Wisdom ; *He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and sheweth Compassion to whom he will shew Compassion*, Rom. ix. 18.

Now, he hath determined to give forth his saving Mercy in a *Covenant*, or *legal Way*, upon certain Terms or Conditions, which he hath made necessary to render the Objects capable of it, such as, *Faith* in his Son Jesus Christ, *Repentance* towards himself, and *new Obedience*. If any then come not up to these Terms, and labour not to become fit Recipients of God's saving Mercy, they shall go without it, for be there never so much Mercy in God, and be he never so ready to bestow it, they who prepare not themselves shall not taste it ; God's Mercy doth not bind him to save Men in their Sins, and he will be able to reconcile his infinite Mercy and Goodness with their endless Misery and Torment.

Oh ! that such Sinners would consider that they build their Hope on a Foundation that will equally serve the Devils to build on ! God is merciful, and they know it ; and yet they are held in Chains of everlasting Darkness, and must suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire.

Again, Arguments against this false Hope of unconverted Sinners may be drawn even from God's Goodness, who may be good, and yet not do Good to me : For, if God be good, then he hates Evil, and my Conscience tells me, *I am altogether evil*. If God be good, he is most good to himself, and will not endure his Creatures to act against him without Punishment. Now what will become of thy Hope, when that Goodness thou foundest it upon will implead thee, saying, *Lord save him not, for he has abused me, he has sinned against me,*

me, and rendered himself unfit for Communion with me.

(2.) Others build their Hopes on God's Providence, and their present outward Prosperity, without any Word of Promise to support them ; they live in Plenty, and thrive in the World, and therefore think their Mountain standeth strong, that they shall never be moved, and make *Gold their Hope*, and *fine Gold their Confidence* ; and because their earthly Riches procure them Respect and Esteem in the World, they persuade themselves they have also the Favour of God.

But, what a deceitful Hope is this ! for, with God there is no Respect of Persons, he loves no Man for his Riches, nor hates any Man for his Poverty ; and therefore no Argument of God's Love or Hatred can be drawn meerly from Men's outward Condition ; for *no Man knoweth either Love or Hatred by all that is before him*, Eccles. ix. 1. Did they so, were Riches a Mark of God's Favour, then we might take our *Index Expurgatorius*, and dash out of the *New Testament* that Sentence of our Lord, *Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your Consolation*, Luke vi. 24. and write instead of it, *Blessed are ye that are rich*.

Indeed, if the Gifts of God might be purchased with Money, as *Simon Magus* thought ; if God sets Heaven to Sale, as the *Pope* doth his *Pardons*, then he that had the largest Purse there, would have the weightiest Crown hereafter ; then the Gospel would be sad Tidings to poor Men. But the Door of Heaven was never yet opened by a *Golden Key* ; God never gave earthly Possessions as Earnests of the heavenly Inheritance : But, as the Moon, when she is at the Full, is farthest from, and in direct Opposition to the Sun, so 'tis the Temper of most to be farthest from, and most opposite to Christ, when they receive the most Light of Prosperity from him, and are fullest of the Blessings of his Goodness : They that have the best of this World are often the worst Men. *Julian the Apostate*, who by the greatest Art and Policy studied

to overthrow the Christian Name, so much observed this, that he made it a Rule, Rather to corrupt Men by Honours, than to compel them by Torments.

If I be wicked, or made worse by my Riches, and pleasant Circumstances, how absurd and preposterous is it, to infer thence God's special Love for me ! Ha'n't I more Ground to fear they are given in Wrath, as *Quails* to the murmuring *Israelites*? What is a fine Suit of Cloaths with the Plague in them? Can a Beggar conclude he shall be made a Nobleman's Heir from his receiving an Alms at his Door? No more can a Man conclude from his worldly Prosperity, that he is an Heir of eternal Life. For,

1.) This is not an invariable, or permanent Good, but fading, and of short Continuance, *I have seen the Wicked*, says the *Psalmist*, *in great Power, and spreading himself like a green Bay-Tree*; *yet he passed away, and lo, he was not*; *yea, I sought him, but he could not be found*, Psal. xxxvii. 35, 36. How soon was *Hamans* Prosperity over ! How short-liv'd *Adonijah's* Reign and Royalty ! How quick the Period of *Absalom's* pleasant Days ! Earthly Prosperity, though it be a beautiful Flower in the Eyes of Worldlings, yet 'tis a withering one, like *Jonah's Gourd*, it soon fades; And then, where's your Hope when the Foundation of it is gone ? That which must support an incorruptible Spirit, had Need be something of an incorruptible Nature. He that builds for Eternity should build firmly, and make Choice of a more stable Foundation than the uncertain Riches of this World, that change their Owners as oft as some Servants do their Masters. As the *Basis* of your Hope is, so must needs be the Hope that is erected on it; a Hope of a Felicity that endures for ever built upon Riches *that are not for ever*, Prov. xxvii. 24. must perish when those Riches the *Basis* of it fail.

2.) That out of which Evil usually springs can't make a safe Foundation to build your Hope of the greatest

greatest Good upon. Now, a three fold Evil springs to a wicked Man out of his present Prosperity.

[1.] Prosperity hardeneth his Heart, which is a spiritual Judgment in the midst of temporal Enjoyments, and wholly indisposes a Man for the Sight of God; *Because they have no Changes, therefore they fear not God,* Psal. lv. 19. *I spake unto thee in thy Prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear,* Jer. xxii. 21.

[2.] It is Fuel to his Lusts, it draws out and multiplies the Acts of Sin; and can that which feeds those Lusts that deserve Damnation minister any Ground of Hope for Salvation? When God gives wicked Men much in the World, they devote it to the Service of the Flesh, they maintain their Pride, Luxury, and Wantonnes by it: How then can they hope God should entrust them with the *true Riches*, when they have been so unfaithful in improving the *Mammon of Unrighteousness*? Luke xvi. 11.

[3.] It hastens his Destruction: *The Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them,* Prov. i. 32. That which increaseth Sin must greateren and hasten Wrath; for our suffering Evil is not only deserved, but proportioned by our doing Evil. He that wants spiritual Wisdom to govern himself in a prosperous State, is slain by his Prosperity. Wicked Men prospering in their Wickedness, are like Grapes hung in the Sun-shine 'till they be ripe, and fit for the Wine-Pres.

From the whole, 'tis evident that Men can fetch no firm Hope of Salvation from their prosperous State; he that fared deliciously every Day, in a while saw the Scene changed, and found himself tormented in unquenchable Flames.

(3.) Some ground their Hopes of Heaven on those common Relations wherein God stands to us, and we to him; as on God's Part, that he is their Creator, Owner, Preserver, Protector, Governor, and Benefactor: On their Part, that they are his Creatures and Subjects.

Many

Many poor Wretches, when asked for a Reason of their Hope, can only answer, “ They hope he that made them will have Mercy on them, and that God did not make them that he might damn them.”

But let such as these read *Jerusalem's Doom* in *Isa.* xxvii. 11. *For it is a People of no Understanding, therefore he that made them will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no Favour.* God's making us, whether it be referred to our primitive Creation in *Adam*, or to our Procreation by our next Parent, is no Obligation on God to shew Mercy to us, in Regard we have degenerated sadly from what he made us. God made us upright and holy, but we have made ourselves Sinners; and his Judgments will find us what Sin has made us, if we don't make our Escape out of this sinful Condition by Repentance, and are not new-made by God's regenerating Grace. *He planted us a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed, but how are we turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine?* *Jer. ii. 21.* 'Tis just therefore in him to estrange himself from us.

And though he be our Owner, and at first set his Mark, his moral Image on us, yet since we have disowned him, and defaced his Mark, and contracted the Superscription of the Devil, he may justly disown us, and give unto Satan them that are his.

Besides, none need fear being damned, if God's being their Maker was a sufficient Ground of Hope, for he is equally the Maker and Preserver of the whole World; he is the Maker of Devils, and yet they are in a State of Damnation.

Again, Thou who flatterest thyself, that God who created thee will therefore save thee, dost thou answer the End of thy Creation? Has it been thy chief Endeavour to love, and glorify, and serve him that made thee? Or, Hast not thou lived in Disobedience to him, and forgotten him Days without Number? How canst thou hope for the Benefits of Glorification from the

the Benefits of Creation, when thou hast so wofully abused and perverted them ?

I can assure you, 'tis not enough to beget the Hope of Glory in you, that you are Creatures, unless you be also new Creatures, made so by the regenerating Grace of God.

Is it not enough that God is willing to save you upon easy and unrefusale Terms, but he must also save you, though you neglect your own Salvation, and refuse his Terms of Mercy ?

(4.) Others build their Hopes on Actions which they do, and Sufferings which they undergo, that are, for the Matter of them, the same that the People of God do, and suffer.

Cain and *Abel* both offered Sacrifices to God upon his Altar, at his appointed Time, yet one is in Heaven, the other in Hell. *Peter* and *Judas* both preached Christ, yet one was saved, and the other damned.

The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* gave Alms, and prayed, as well as *Cornelius* ; yet they are rejected, and he is accepted. Two Persons may hear the same Word of God, and yet the Effects of it be very differing ; to one it may prove the *Saviour of Life*, to the other the *Saviour of Death*. You read, *Luke xviii. 10.* *That two Men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican ; yet one went down to his House justified rather than the other.* Here was the same material Duty performed by both, but their Spirits and the Manner of Performance greatly differed.

So that the external Worship of God, hearing the Word, commanding the Preachers, going to the Sacrament, and the doing other Duties materially the same that God's peculiar People do, are not sufficient to give us a well-grounded Hope, for God regards the Frame of our Spirits, and our Ends in Duty more than the Matter of them. That which is a proper Ground of Hope must be something above the Reach of an Hypocrite,

pocrite, otherwise 'twill leave us, with Hypocrites, short of Heaven.

And there's a Parity of Reason, as to those Sufferings we undergo in common with God's Children. Many, because they know so much Sorrow, and go through so many Sufferings in this Life, hope, that surely they shall be set free in the Life to come: But let such know, that there are no Promises made to bare Sufferings; and where there's no Promise, there's no Ground of Hope: Nay, 'tis possible a Man may suffer in the Cause of Christ, and yet miscarry, because he suffers not with a Christian Spirit, nor out of Love to Jesus Christ. The Apostle *Paul* makes a Supposition that confirms this, *1 Cor. xiii. 3.* *Though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

(5.) Some build their Hope upon their Participation of Church-Privileges, as their being born of Christian Parents, who got them baptiz'd, entered them into Covenant with God, gave them a Religious Education, and have engaged the Prayers of many good People for them.

But did not the *Jews* make this very Claim! Did not they bear the Mark of God's Covenant in their Flesh, by which they were distinguished from the uncircumcised *Gentiles*? Had they not *Abraham* for their Father? Were they not descended of Religious Ancestors, with whom God had established his Covenant? Had they not the Symbols or Tokens of God's special Presence with them? And did they not cry, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*, *Jer. vii. 4.* Yet, notwithstanding all these Privileges, these Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into *utter Darkness*; *Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first*, *Mat. viii. 12.* And doth not our blessed Lord beat the *Jews* from this Refuge, the Dignity of their Pedigree, and the Piety of their Progenitors, in *Mat. iii. 9.* *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham*

raham to our Father, for, I say unto you, that God is able of these Stones to raise up Children unto Abraham.

In vain is the Piety of our Parents pleaded, if we don't draw their Virtues and Graces into Example by our Imitation of them: Who was higher in Church-Privileges than St. Paul, which he reckons up, *Phil. iii. 4, --- 8*? yet after God had revealed his Son in him, he durst not anchor his Hopes on them, but counted all Loss for Christ.

That general Conceit of Men, that they were regenerated in Baptism, furthers the Deceit of great Numbers, when there is an utter Impossibility, that Baptism should either principally or instrumentally work any Grace in the Soul of an Infant without a Miracle: For, if it do, 'tis either by a *Physical proper Efficiency*, or else *morally*.

Nor *Physically*, because then the Water must be capable, 1. Of receiving the Grace, and 2. Of approaching the Soul in the Application and Conveyance. Both which are Impossibilities in Nature.

Nor can Baptism work morally, where there is not the Use of Reason to understand, and consider of its Signification. God is a free Agent, and by meer Concoitancy may make Baptism the Season of regenerating whom he pleases; but that he never intended Regeneration to be the End of Baptism, may, I think, be easily proved. As for Men at Age, the Matter is out of Question, seeing Faith and Repentance is every where required of them to make them capable of Baptism. Now to make it the great End of the Ordinance to effect that in Infants which is a pre-requisite Condition in all others, seems a strange Fiction, and hath nothing considerable that I know of to support it. Though I grant it to be an Instrument of relative Regeneration and Sanctification.

From what has been said, it appears that they who build their Hopes upon the Foundation of a Baptismal Regeneration, build upon a Nullity; for we see, by

by their Fruits, that many of those that are baptized are not regenerated. And seeing we are born God's Enemies, we must be new-born his Sons, or remain Enemies still.

(6.) Others hope for Salvation, because they are not so bad as their Neighbours : But let such take Notice, that as there are several Degrees of good Men, so there are several Degrees of bad Men, and accordingly, there are in Hell several Degrees of Torments prepared for them. Some are far better than others, and yet not good enough to be saved. A Man may be *almost a Christian*, and yet there may be *one Thing lacking* that belongs to the Essentials of Christianity, and is necessary to constitute him a true Christian, for want of which he may be lost. Some that are not far from the Kingdom of God, yet never enter into it; but are at last shut out. The young Man that came to Christ to enquire of him the Way to eternal Life, was far better than the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who railed at Jesus Christ, and counted him a *Deceiver*; yet this hopeful Youth was kept from Gospel-Obedience and Salvation by his Love to this World, *Mat. xix.*

The *five foolish Virgins* were not so bad as many others; that they are called *Virgins*, intimates, that they had kept themselves free from the gross Pollutions of the World; and that they had *Lamps*, implies, they made a Profession of Religion, yet their having *no Oil*, plainly shews they were graceless, and are therefore shut out, *Mat. xxv.*

God never laid our Salvation upon Negatives or Comparisons, he never promised, that if we were no Drunkards, Swearers, or Adulterers, we should be eternally saved : All that such can hope for, who have no better Ground of Hope to rest on, is an easier Damnation than others, or a cooler Place in Hell. But small is the Comfort of this, the coolest Place in Hell will be found hot enough.

(7.) Some build their Hope on a Form of Godliness, an outward Profession of Religion, and an external Conformity to the Laws of God. Many hope it shall go well with them, because they are Hearers of the Word, read the Scripture, and love good Ministers, because they keep good Company, and pay everyone their own. But this is a very slender *Basis* to found an Hope of eternal Life upon; how nearer are they to Heaven for having a Form of Godliness, while they deny the Power thereof? What will it avail them to hear the Word of God, if they will not do it? For, *they are the Doers of the Law only that shall be justified*, Rom. ii. 13. Many of Christ's Hearers are now in Hell, Luke xiii. 26, 27. *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drank in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets; but he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.* Working Iniquity, you see, may stand with a Profession of Godliness, and hearing the Word; such a Profession and Hearing therefore will never screen you from the fearful Doom just mentioned: And what our Lord saith, Matth. vii. 26, 27. *Every one that heareth these Sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish Man, who built his House upon the Sand,* is enough to shame you out of such groundless Hopes. But if you are not shamed out of them now, their Disappointment, at least, will confound you, according to James i. 22. *Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own Selves.* The Profession of Religion will never pass with God for the Practice of it; nor prove a sufficient Title to Heaven: *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. vii. 21. So that all who trust to a Form of Godliness, while they are unchanged into the Image of God, and are void of the Life of God, will,

will, at length, find themselves under a miserable Deception.

(8.) Others hope to be saved, because Christ has died for Sinners : But what is this to them who never felt the Power of his Death in the Death of their Sins, nor the Virtue of his Resurrection in their being quickned by his Spirit.

Though Jesus Christ died, he died not to save impenitent, unbelieving Sinners, who prefer their Sins to their Saviour : He died not to procure thee a License to Sin as long, and as much as thou canst with Impunity. He died not to save us absolutely as Sinners, but on certain Terms and Conditions to be fulfilled by us, agreed upon, in the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and himself. So that to hope in Christ's Death for Salvation, and yet to refuse his Terms, and deny him Admittance when he knocks at thy Door, to hinder him from sitting as a Priest on his Throne in thy Heart, and from ruling thee by his Law and Spirit, is the same as if a sick Man should hope to be recovered, by a Medicine lying by him in his Chamber, which he will not be persuaded to take, though 'tis the only one that can cure him.

Christ doth not save us barely as a dying Saviour, or as an offered Saviour, but as an accepted, applied Saviour : So that if thou hast not cordially and thankfully accepted of Jesus Christ for thy Lord ; if there be not a Christ within thee in the Workings of his powerful Grace and heavenly Influences inclining thee to that which is holy and good ; in vain is it to hope in a Christ without thee.

Nay, let me tell thee, the Death of Christ will be so far from relieving thee, that it will be an Aggravation of thy Unhappiness in Hell, that thou camest there for sinning against that precious Blood which was shed to save thee from it. Oh ! what a cutting, what a Heart-tearing Reflection will it be to condemned Souls, to think, that Jesus Christ should express so much Love and

and Pity to them, as to die such a Death as he died to save them from that Condemnation, and yet they wou'd not be ruled by him to do what he wou'd have had them done, and what was necessary to prevent this dreadful State. Oh ! how sad beyond Expression is this; when that Death which wou'd have saved them from everlasting Death, shall thro' their Unbelief and Impenitency give Life and Vigour to their Tortures, and render them more unsupportable. For doubtless the Damn'd wou'd have had a lighter Punishment in Hell; if Christ had never died for them.

(9.) Some build their Hope on Purposes and Resolutions of a future Repentance and Reformation. They are not able to withstand the Power of Conviction of the Necessity of a Repentance unto Salvation, and therefore stifle Conviction, and keep Conscience quiet with some Purposes of amending hereafter. But what a brittle Foundation is here ! Can that Hope be certain, the Ground of which is so infinitely uncertain ! Nay, those very Purposes must be uncertain, in regard 'tis not certain they shall have Time to prosecute them into Performances. How knowest thou, O delaying Sinner, whether thy Life shall last till thou hast done what thou hast resolv'd upon ? Doth it not hang in Uncertainties every Moment ? And if Death intervene between thy Purposes and the Execution of them, where art thou then ! In what a Case ! Wilt not thou be thrown into Hell with all thy unperformed Purposes about thee ? Is not Hell full of delaying Sinners, who once purpos'd, and promis'd to themselves Time after Time to turn over a new Leaf, and become new Creatures, to leave sinning, and get the saving Knowledge of Christ, who yet cou'd never find Time to accomplish their Purposes, but put all off till it was too late ?

That Repentance and Reformation, which thou makest the Ground of thy Hope, is future, and hath at present no Being, by which thou implicitly acknowledges

ledges to have no present Ground of Hope, for that which is not can't be a Foundation for another Thing that is. Cashier then thy groundless Hopes, away with 'em ! 'Tis Madness to adventure thy Soul and thy Salvation on them.

(10.) Others hope it will go well with them, because they are Orthodox and Sound in Judgment, of a right Opinion concerning the Truths of Religion, and have Abundance of Knowledge and good Gifts, and side with the Godly Party.

But to such I answer, That God will not try Men by their Opinions, but by their Hearts and Lives. The Apostle tells us, that *whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away,* 1 Cor. xiii. 8. He means speculative Knowledge, which goes no further than the Brain; it will vanish as to the Use and Advantage of it. How dreadful is that Complaint, " We Learned Men " go with all our Learning to Hell, while the Un- " learned take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force."

Moreover, the Devil is doubtless Orthodox, and has more Learning than the most learned Clerks. But He, with many others among the Learned hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, are *Heterodox* in their Lives; their Principles and Practices tread *Antipodes* to each other. Goodness doth not always accompany Knowledge; nor are they always Godly themselves who join with the Godly Party. So that be Learning, Orthodoxy and Gifts never so valuable, they fall below special Grace; as a Dunghill may be cover'd with Snow, so these Ornaments may set off a wicked Man, and will but serve as a Torch to light him down to Hell, unless with them he also possess the Spirit of Love and Power, and yields Obedience to the Truth he knows. While Men have impure Hearts and filthy Lives, they will not be fav'd for having clear Heads.

(11.) Some think they have a moral Righteousness, and others, that they have Merits; and hereon they ground

ground their Hope: But hear what our Lord saith; *Except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. v. 20. This one Text is enough to blast and confute the Hope that's built on that sort of maimed civil Righteousness, which was the Pharisees Boast, according to *Luke xvi. 15. Ye are they that justify your selves before Men, but God know-eth your Hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among Men, is an Abomination in the Sight of God.*

Can we hope that God will abate us Obedience to Commands that immediately concern himself, and guard his own Honour? Or, that he will not stand upon his Due, provided Men have theirs? Can we imagine that God will allow us to be unjust towards Himself, and account it made up by the Practice of Justice towards Men? This wou'd be to give up his Glory to another, which he will certainly never do; this wou'd be a preferring his Creatures to Himself.

Let me ask you, wou'd such a Propofal, such Language as this become the Great God: "Keep but your Word with your Fellow-Creatures, be honest in your Dealings, defraud no Man, covet no Man's Goods, be courteous, be pitiful, relieve those that are in Want, and I shall dispense with all the Rest; tho' you don't love me, nor give any Worship, Honour, or Homage to me, nor believe my Promises, nor keep your Covenant with me, yet this shall not prejudice your Salvation, nor hinder you of Happiness"? Yet thus do these Self-justiciaries introduce the blessed God speaking to them. But behold all ye that kindle a Fire, that compass your selves about with the Sparks of it, walk in the Light of your Fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; this shall ye have of mine Hand, ye shall lie down in Sorrow, Isa. l. 11. This Fire and these Sparks are to be understood of such Means of Light, Support and Comfort as wicked Worldlings are wont to rely upon; 'tis an

Allusion to Men's comforting themselves in cold and wet weather by a Fire they have kindled. And I may apply it to those that make their civil Honesty their Hope, for this, without supernatural Grace, will not warm or comfort the Hearts of those that trust to it, 'twill sooner burn than warm them, they *shall lie down in Sorrow*.

The Death and the Gospel of the Son of God have an higher End and Tendency, than *meerly* to move Men to honest Dealings amongst themselves. Their Design is to advance us far above Heathen Attainments, even to reconcile us to God, and to cleanse us from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, that we may perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.

(12.) And *Lastly*, Others form their Hope from Gospel Promises misapplied, and the Conditions of which they never perform'd. But 'tis certain no Promise of Mercy, of pardoning Grace, or sanctifying Grace, will prove the Validity of your Hope, without the Qualifications of such Promises in your selves.

'Tis granted, the Promises are rich and clear, and are a Christian's principal Evidence, or Foundation of his Right to Heaven, but what is all this to thee, who has nothing to do with the Promises? What do they signify to thy Comfort, when thy Name is not put in them? No more than Bonds and Bills do to enrich thee that belong to other Men. The Promises may be compar'd to the Clothes we wear; if there be Heat in the Body to warm us, they will warm us; but if they receive no Heat from us, they will give none to us. Where there is Faith in the Promises, and a suprem Love to the promis'd Good, there the Promise will give Peace, strong Consolation, and inward Joy to the Believer's Bosom; but on a dead unbelieving Heart, the Promises lie cold and ineffectual, they avail no more than a Cordial pour'd into a dead Man's Mouth. A Promise, without the Condition of the Promise perform'd on thy Part, is

no Obligation on God's Part, and therefore no safe Ground of Hope on thine.

Thus have I discover'd the rotten Foundation that many build their Hope of Glory on, which the Lord grant may have this happy Effect, to keep you from losing your Souls by resting on them.

Cursed be thy Hopes, impenitent Sinner ! because they are disgraceful to Almighty God, tending to make him a Lyar and Unjust ; and because they are dangerous to thy own Soul, tending to rock thee asleep in the Cradle of Security.

Thou may'st as well hope that the Devils shall come out of Hell into Heaven, as that thou shalt go out of Earth into Heaven, who never yet diedst unto Sin, nor beganst to live to God.

And for ever to discourage such Hopes, and deliver you from them ; let me add, that a false Hope is consequentially chargeable,

[1.] With Blasphemy.

[2.] Despair and Death are its Issues.

[1.] *Blasphemy*. For what is it less to hope that God will prove a Deceiver, and never execute his Threatnings ? Either then God must forsake his Truth, or these cursed Hopes will forsake them. Hath not God declar'd, that *the Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God, Psal. ix. 17* ? And that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14* ? Now if unholie and impenitent Sinners shall see God, and the wicked escape Hell and get to Heaven, where's the Veracity of God ? And what is become of his Truth ? Away therefore with such a God provoking, blasphemous Hope !

[2.] *Desperation and Death* are the end of it. When the Wicked's Hope is lost and gone, the Horrors of Desperation succeed, which like a Worm will be perpetually gnawing the Soul. Despair is a Sin here,

whilst

whilst we are in a State of Hope, but 'tis chang'd into a Punishment in Hell, and is one of the sorest Parts of Punishment there. 'Tis an Arrow that drinks up the Spirit, and makes the Creature an Executioner to it self. To think, "I have put my self beyond all Hope and Possibility of Relief, and have laid the Foundation of perpetual Despair by cherishing a false Hope": How can we bear up under such Reflections? How will they tear the Heart, and scorch the Conscience!

Death is another Issue of it, For *what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul?* Job xxvii. 8. 'Tis a *Hope that shall perish*, Job viii. 13. When they die, their Hopes die together with them; Death that cuts off the Thread of their Lives, cuts off all their Hopes. Hope is the last Piece which Man quits the Possession of in his greatest Extremities, and when that is gone, all is gone; if your Hope dieth, your Duties die, your Endeavours die, your Joys and Comforts die, and your Souls die; Man hath nothing more to be destroy'd, after his Hope is destroy'd.

The Righteous hath Hope in his Death, for then his Hopes are most lively and nearest to Fruition; but there is Death in the Hopes of the Wicked, they vanish in a Tragical Expiration. The Heart of their Hopes will be broken at Death, they must bid them all Farewel, and perish together with them.

The *Giving up of the Ghost*, Job xi. 20. Is a most fit; but terrible Resemblance of a wicked Man's giving up his Hopes. For,

1.) As' the Soul departeth not from the Body without the greatest Terror and Pain, so doth the Hope of the Wicked depart. Oh, the direful Gripes and Pangs of Horror that seize upon the Soul of a Sinner at Death and Judgment, when he is parting with all his former Hopes!

2.) The

2.) The Soul departeth from the Body suddenly, in a Moment after it hath delightfully continued there many Years, just so doth the Hope of a wicked Man depart, all on a suddain.

3.) The Soul which then departeth will never return to live with the Body, in this World, any more; and the Hope of the Wicked, when it departeth, taketh an everlasting Leave of his Soul. A Miracle of Resurrection shall again conjoin the Soul and Body; but there shall be no such miraculous Resurrection of the Damned's Hope.

“ Methinks, *faith one*, it is the most doleful Spectacle that this World affords to see such an ungodly Person dying, and to think of his Soul and his Hopes departing together, and with what a sad Change he presently appears in the other World”.

Now, why shou'd any of you make your selves such doleful Spectacles, by taking up with an Hope that hath Death written upon it, and that can't relieve you in your final Agony!

2. We may infer the Excellency of Christian Hope. It is a Sin-mortifying, an Heart-purifying, a Soul-quieting and establishing Hope. But for this Hope in Christ, the Christian's Heart wou'd break; they wou'd never bear up under the Succession of Difficulties, Sorrows, and Sufferings they meet with here; without this Hope in Christ, *they wou'd be of all Men most miserable*, 1 Cor. xv. 19.

The Excellency of this Hope appeareth by its superadding to *common Hope*,

- (1.) Sanctity or Holiness.
- (2.) Solidity and Firmness.
- (3.) Certainty.
- (4.) Uniform tendency to our Object and end.

(1.) Sanctity or Holiness. The Hope of the Hypocrite is an impure Hope, it lets them alone in Sin, as if they thought Christ had repented and believed for them. Their Hope will stand with an unrenewed Nature and unsanctified Affections; but the Christian's Hope can't breath in an impure Air, nor consist with the Love of Sin, and the Absence of God's Image, but will excite the Subjects of it to Holiness both of Heart and Life; hope to live for ever with God, will stir up all the active Principles in a Man to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God, that they may resemble him, they hope e're long to be with, and ever to behold.

(2.) Solidity and Firmness. A common Hope is an unstable fluctuating Hope, that ebbs and flows with our outward Condition; Prosperity flushes it, Disappointment starves it: 'Tis weak and of little Substance, like a Spider's Web, and can't keep its Post in a Storm. But the Christian's Hope is a solid substantial Hope, that will stay and support the Soul in Extremity, it holds out and endures under all the Vicissitudes and Accidents of Time. Under the several Changes of Peace and Wars, Honour and Disgrace, Plenty and Poverty, the Christian Hopes still, because he believes all these are subject to the ordering of divine Providence, and shall work together for his Good.

(3.) Certainty. Whereas Uncertainty is the Character and Disparagement of common Hope. Numerous Accidents may intervene between the Worldling and the Fruition of his Hope, that may fill him with Anguish for a Disappointment. Many that hope to be rich, die poor; that hope for Preferment, die under a Cloud; that hope for Content and Satisfaction in the Accomplishment of their Designs, die before they have brought Things to Perfection; and there's an

End

End of them, their Hopes and Happiness together, their Thoughts perish.

But the Hope of Christians is a sure and certain Hope, and *maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in their Hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them*, Rom. v. 5. It is a Hope that will never, by the Disappointment thereof, occasion them to be reproach'd with Weakness and Imprudence. For their Souls are in the Hands of a compassionate and faithful Saviour, and the Kingdom they look for at the Disposal of a gracious and bountiful God; sooner then shall Faithfulness degenerate into Perfidiousness, Truth into a Lie, Light into Darknes, than the Believers Interest in the last Will of Christ deceive their Expectation; for their Hope is *an Anchor both sure and stedfast*, Heb. vi. 19.

(4.) Uniform Tendency to our Object and End. The Hope of all Saints doth meet in one Center of Eternal Glory; whereas common Hopes are divaricated and scatter'd among worldly Trifles. One Man hopes for the Reversion of an Estate, another for a convenient House, a third for a Benefice, a fourth for a Post of Honour; but the Saints are above all these, their Hopes unite in the glorious Inheritance purchas'd for them by the Blood of Christ.

And this is enough to satisfy them all, and to fill up their Desires, tho' never so extended. On this they hope to live in full Content thro' eternal Ages.

3. You may infer your own Privilege, that you are in a State of Hope, Prisoners of Hope, notwithstanding your great Sins, and your long Contempt of offer'd Mercy; and you may infer your own Duty, to improve this Privilege by your becoming Partakers of this Hope, which, thro' the Grace and Long-suffering of God, is yet attainable.

The Door of Mercy is not shut, nor the white Flag of Peace taken down. God hath not yet done knocking

knocking at your Door, no more than he hath shut his own. He hath not left courting your Hearts for Christ, nor given over striving with you by his Holy Spirit, in order to conquer the Resistance of your Wills; He does invite you once more by me this Day to lay hold on eternal Life, and to labour after that Hope that will set you a moving towards the Object of your Hope.

And let me persuade you to this by the following Considerations.

(1.) Without this Hope you will have no Support under your Afflictions, from which you have no Charter of Exemption, for Man is Born to Trouble.

As common Reason then bids you expect them, Wisdom will prompt you to prepare for them, that ye may be able to bear up under them. But can ye find any other Arguments, but what are fetch'd from the Hope of a Blessed Immortality, that will be of sufficient Strength to sustain your Spirit under them?

The Unavoidableness and Commonness of Afflictions are such Considerations as afford but little Relief, it must be something of an higher Nature that will keep the Spirit from being overwhelm'd. When your Flesh fails, and your Strength is gone; when Interest, Friends, Physicians, Servants, Credit can do no more for you; when all Creature Supports sink, and you are also without Hope in Christ and Heaven, What Shift will you make? How will you keep Terrors from invading you? Won't you be as a Ship toss'd upon a rough Tempestuous Sea without an Anchor?

(2.) How will you be able to look Death, the King of Terrors in the Face, without this Hope of eternal Life, when all your worldly Hopes forsake you?

Do you need to be told that we are Born to Die, that the Time is hastening when Death will Force your Souls out of your Bodies, to make their Appearance before the suprem Judge of Quick and Dead ? And how dreadful will it be then to have no other Hope, but what must expire together with this Life ? Can ye bear the Thoughts of being summon'd to this awful Tribunal, without any Hope to be acquitted and justified there ? Won't it daunt the most stout-hearted Sinner to stand in these Circumstances before the great God, much more than a poor arraign'd Criminal is daunted when brought before the Judge of an Assize without any Hope of Acquitment ?

No wonder if unsanctified Sinners be very loath to Die, for they are unprepared for it, having no Helmet to cover their Head in the Day of their final Conflict ; they have, alas, a terrible Enemy to conquer, and no Weapon to encounter him with. Their House is ready to drop down about their Ears, and they know not of another to put their Heads in.

Could we look into the Breast of an unsanctified Sinner, that's going out of this Life, without the Hopes of a better ; what a ghastly Spectacle would this be ! What a Seat of Horror and Wo ! What a Receptacle of black and melancholy Thoughts ! What an uneasy restless and forlorn Object !

Well then, if you wou'd not be in a Storm without a Shelter, in Distress without Succour, overwhelm'd with Grief without an Antidote, languishing without a Cordial, drooping and fainting away without a Support ; See that Troubles find you not without the Possession of this Christian Hope.

But the Possessors of this Hope know, *That when the earthly House of this Tabernacle shall be dissolv'd, they shall have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens,* 2 Cor. 5. 1. therefore they fear not a Dissolution,

If

If a Man being desperately sick to Day, did hope he should rise sound the next Morning; or had a Man in despicable Poverty, Assurance, that to morrow he should rise a Prince, would these Men be afraid to go to Bed, would they not rather wish the Day at an end, and long to close their Eyes?

A noble Captain of *Thebes* having got the Victory over his Enemies, but withal receiv'd his mortal Wound; he made it his great Enquiry, whether his Weapons were safe, whether his Buckler was not in his Enemies Hands. And when it was replied all was safe with Fortitude and Chearfulness he died. So when a Christian is to grapple with Death, his main Care is that his Buckler of Faith, and the Helmet of his Salvation, hope, be safe to guard his Soul, and then he little cares what becomes of his outward Members, but dies in Confidence and Peace.

But to an impure Sinner, whose Heart is destitute of this Hope, the very Apprehensions of Death are terrible, much more the Approach of it. Never was Man over Head and Ears in Debt, so afraid to meet a Bailiff, as the unsanctified Sinner is of looking Death, God's Bailiff in the Face, when he must be arrested for a Debt of ten thousand Talents, and has nothing to pay them with, nor any Surety to engage for him.

(3.) What would the Devils and the Damned in Hell give for such an Opportunity of gaining this Hope, as the Patience of God yet affords you?

Had they Millions of Worlds to give, they would not regret to part with them all for your Possibilities and Opportunities, nor think the Purchase, on any Terms, too dear. Were they in your Circumstances, would they neglect the Means of attaining this Hope, as you do? Would they adventure all upon the un-
found Bottom of a false Hope? Would they for the sake of worldly Greatnes, Riches, and sensual Delights, renounce

renounce their Hopes of everlasting Glory, which now by sad Experience they know the Loss of ?

Why then shouldst thou feed thy Fancy with the deceitful Hopes of petty Trifles, whilst thou starvest thy Soul by refusing to take Pains for the infinitely better Hope of a glorious Resurrection, and the promised Rest ? Will any thing recompence the Loss of this Hope ? Or, will nothing but too late Experience convince thee of the Worth of Opportunities for ensuring Heaven by a lively Hope ? Oh the Stupidity of un-holy Sinners, that will not know their precious Seasons, nor employ them aright, till a dear bought Experience of the loss of the Heavenly Joys teach them what it was to lose them !

(4.) You are yet possess'd of the Means to beg in you this same Hope. The Golden Trumpet of the everlasting Gospel is yet sounding in your Ears, the Divine Promises, that give Life to this Hope, are yet display'd before you, and the Royal Precepts of the Word that oblige you to come up to the Conditions of the Promises, are still urg'd upon you. The Ministers of Christ are also at Work to persuade you to get this Hope, to direct you how to do it, and to encourage your Endeavours after it ; they pray for you, in Hope they may prevail with God to give you this Grace ; they warn you of those evil Ways, and reprove you for those Sins that are Enemies to this Hope ; they excite you to Watchfulness against Satan's Temptations ; they set before you Examples of Terror and Despair on the one Hand, where Men have been void of this Hope ; and of Joy and Triumph on the other Hand, where the Saints have been fill'd with this Hope of Glory, and been thereby enabled to kiss a Stake, and embrace the Flames. .

Now what Improvement do you make of these Means and Helps ? Do they quicken your Endeavours to become Partakers of this Hope ; that you may follow

low the Saints, and be numbered with them to Glory everlasting ? The End of Hope's being planted in the

Ut Operationem ex-
peditam reddat.

Soul is, that it may further us in our Heavenly Work, and the End of the Gospel is to beget in us this Hope. Which leads me,

(5.) Hope will be a great Instrument of Duty, and is a necessary Motive to all the Parts of your Christian Work. How can you pray and mourn, watch, and run, and fight, and hold on in Duty without Hope ? If there be not this Principle to set you on Work, God will have no Work well done ; your Duties will be dead, if Hope be not the Life of them. Praying and Hearing will be dull, if Hope do not quicken them.

I grant, a false Hope may carry you to the Outside of Duty, to the Porch of God's House, near to the Threshold of Heaven, but it must be this true Christian Hope I am speaking of, that must carry you through Duty into God's House, and within the Gates of the Heavenly City. Labour then after this Hope.

(6.) Add to all these the undoubted Certainty and Excellency of a State of Blessedness and Glory to be hoped for.

Many have left all for it, and could you speak with them, they would satisfy you, their Hope did not deceive them, but that the glorious Enjoyments they possess do far exceed their highest Hopes. They find the Promises of this blessed State on which they anchored their Hope, made good to their everlasting Satisfaction, and abundantly beyond their Understanding and Conception. They have no more Doubts concerning this Blessedness ; they feel with infinite Pleasure, and Delight, the Sweetness of these Joys thou art called to Hope for ; their glorified Spirits actually feed upon, and most delightfully relish that Heavenly *Manns* that's

that's laid up in the Promise for thee, and which thou art invited to Labour after.

Verily, had we no higher Hopes than Earthly ones, I should take Man for a most silly Creature, and his Work and Wages, his Travel and Felicity to be meer Dreams and Vanity, scarce worth the mentioning or minding. But the Christian hath an higher Hope, even a purifying Hope, and if this Hope deceive Christians, and prove but the Hope of a Fool's Paradise, then God hath deceived them, for 'tis he who hath revealed the glorious Objects of this Hope, and also formed this Hope in them. But is there any Fear, lest Faithfulness it self should deceive us? Would we did believe and Hope till then. Or doth *Jehovah* need to flatter poor Dust? If he were minded to destroy us, he need not lead us about to Destruction by any long Methods of Deceit, 'tis but drawing a Pin, and our Earthly House drops down, and we drop into Hell.

The Devil may deceive us, and the Blanishments of the World impose on us, but there's no Gulle in the Mouth of God, who *hath magnified his Word above all his Name, Psal. cxxxviii. 2.* Since then there does undoubtedly exist a future State of Blessedness, as the Object of Hope, you are concern'd to put forth your most vigorous Endeavours to become posses'd of this Hope, whose Object is infallibly existing, and unspeakably glorious.

4. Professed Christians are oblig'd to evidence the Being and Genuineness of their Hope by their Purity, and living as becomes the Possessors of such an Hope. It is a Disparagement to the Blessed State ye hope for, to live below or beside your Hope of it; to lie groveling on the Earth, as if nothing higher was to be expect-ed; or as if a Clod of Earth was better than a Diadem of Glory. Particularly,

(1.) Live better than others, who have not this purifying Hope. You must out-live the Men of the World, whose Hopes reach not beyond the Bounds of the World they are in. Be not like the Wicked here, if you would live at a Distance from them, and be unlike to them hereafter. Do you hope to be singing when they are sorrowing and sighing ; to be triumphing and rejoicing in the glorious Presence and Communion of your Redeemer, when they are banished from the Court of Heaven, and howling and shrieking in Hell ? Do you hope to reign with Christ in his Kingdom, when they shall roar with Devils ? To shine as the Sun in the Firmament, in the bright Robes of Glory, when they shall be put away like Dross, and rise to everlasting Shame and Contempt ? Then see that you be praying, when they are Cursing and Swearing ; be ye mourning for Sin, when they are sporting themselves with it, making a mock and boasting of it ; be ye sanctifying the Lord's Day in the publick and private Exercises of his Worship, while they are profaning it by serving the Devil, and pleasing the Flesh.

Are your Hopes higher ? Let your Conversation be more Heavenly, endeavour what you can to make others like you in Holiness and Duty, but let not them make you like themselves in Filthiness and Sin ; for we must *not be conform'd to this present World*, Rom. 12. 2. A little Duty will serve them, they are tir'd out before they are warm in it ; but be not ye weary in well-doing, for *in due Time ye shall reap if ye faint not*, live to him with whom ye hope 'ere long to reign in Life eternal ; glorify your God and Saviour by your strict and godly Lives, whom ye hope will glorify you. In a Word, let Men read your Hopes in the Face of your Conversation.

(2.) Live better than your selves, whilst ye were Strangers to this Hope ; you must excel your former selves,

as well as Others. Let it appear by the Change of your Course, that this Hope is the Principle of a better Temper than ever ye had in your unregenerate State. Shew the Excellency of your Hope in the excellent Image of God upon your Spirits; let Men see, by beholding your holy Care and Diligence to please God, how much Grace can outvie Nature, and what a vast Difference there is between the unregenerate and regenerate State.

(3.) Live more like your Pattern the Lord Jesus Christ. Exemplify his Virtues, shew forth his Praises, who hath called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light. He is set before you in my Text as a Pattern of Purity, come as near the spotless Purity of Christ as you can, though you can't come up to it; keep your Pattern in your Eye, and walk as Christ walked, that the Life of Jesus may be manifested in your Mortal Flesh, for you cannot have a more exact Copy.

Take the best of Men since *Adam*, and they are none of them without a flaw; but the Obedience of Christ was every way perfect, and himself was the most excellent Representative of the divine Perfections that ever appear'd in our World: He came here on purpose to shew the World in his own Person, how much of Heaven he could make to dwell in Mortal Flesh; and how gloriously the divine Life could triumph over all the Infirmitiess of frail Humanity.

Now my Counsel to you, Dear Christians, is, that you would look on Jesus, and be like him, his Example is both unexceptionable and imitable. Consider how Christ would have carried had he been in your Circumstances, and do you likewise give Evidence of the Reality and Excellency of your Hopes, and act suitably to them, by being conformable to Christ your Pattern.

(4.) Live within View of what you hope for. If Heaven was more in your Sight, what haste would ye

make towards it, would any thing divert you from the Pursuit of it ? Would you not Stretch every Nerve, and act to the utmost that you might take that Kingdom by Force ? What manner of Persons would a Prospect of the Glory thereof make you ! What vigorous Endeavours in a way of Obedience would this produce ! Methinks a believing Foresight of Heaven should have in it a transforming Virtue, to change you into the Likeness of the blessed Inhabitants of that glorious City.

(5.) Live like the Persons ye hope e're long to be. Do ye not Hope in a while to live without Sin, to be made perfect in Holiness, to have the Image of God filled up in you, and to do the Will of God perfectly, cheerfully, constantly, without any Reluctance, Distraction, or Weariness ? Do ye not hope to be able to keep Pace with the Heavenly Choir of glorified Spirits in Singing the Praises of their and your God and King ? And should it not be your Endeavour to be like 'em here, and to get as much of their Love, Delight, Holiness, Zeal, and Cheerfulness as is possible ? Should ye not strive to do the Will of God on Earth in some Measure, as tis done by those harmonious Choristers in Heaven ?

(6.) Live in the Exercise of unfeigned Thankfulness, and rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God, and wait for the Accomplishment of that Hope. It is God *who hath caused you to hope*, Psal. cxix. 49. Hope is a Plant of God's setting, a supernatural Grace of his infusing, a fruit of his Spirit ; hath God then been so distinguishingly gracious to thee, as to put a lively Hope within thee ? Hath he in his infinite Love excited in thy Heart this Hope, which is the Gate of Heaven, which entreth within the Vail, and bringeth thee nearer to himself ? Hath he begotten thee again to this Hope, which taketh thee by the Hand, and leads thee thro' the Streets of the new *Jerusalem*, and sheweth

sheweth thee the *Temple of the Lamb*, and the Lamb sitting in his Temple, assuring thee that thou shalt live there with him for ever? Hath he done this for thy Soul? What strong Obligations art thou under to bless and speak good of his Holy Name! Charge thy Soul then, and all that is within thee to praise him, and study to make his Praise glorious; be not soon moved from the Hope of the Gospel, but persevere in the full Assurance thereof unto the End, *Heb. iii. 6. Christ is faithful as a Son over his own House, whose House are we, if we hold fast the Confidence, and the Rejoycing of Hope firm unto the End.*

In this Hope you may rejoice against Hope, and overcome natural and secondary Improbabilities by supernatural Grace.

By this Hope you may be enabled to see thro' a dark Night, to the bright Day that will follow; when the Sun of Righteousness will break forth out of the black Clouds that intercept his refreshing Light.

By this Hope you may look above the Rebukes of God's Providence, and the Frowns of his Countenance upon your external Affairs, and reconcile his Providence which seems to make against you, with his Promises made to you.

In this Hope you may rejoice when earthly Friends deal perfidiously and falsely, break their Promises, are worse than their Word, and abuse your Expectations and Hopes. In such Cases here is Matter of Rejoycing, that you have a better Hope to depend upon, God will not deal treacherously with you, his Promises will not abuse your Expectation, nor will he ever disappoint the Hopes that are grounded on them. The *Foundation of God standeth sure, for the Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. And the Expectation of the Poor shall not perish for ever, Psal. ix. 18.*

To conclude, If the Funs, Riches, and Glory of Heaven, if the highest Flowings forth of the Love of

of God, and the most delightful Communion with him; if the sweetest Relishes of the divine Favour, and the Enjoyment of the ravishing Society of glorious Angels, and the best Men that ever liv'd; if the joyful Exercise of our glorified Faculties upon the noblest Objects to all Eternity, be enough to answer our Expectations, and to fill up our Hopes, we shall not meet with a Disappointment:

F I N I S.

